

# **Hey! Mister Horn Blower**

**Memoirs of a  
Life in Music and Numismatics**



**Gene Hessler**

**Foreword by Zane L. Miller,  
Charles Phelps Taft Professor of History Emeritus, University of Cincinnati**



To Wayne,  
a good friend and  
colleague.

Sincerely,  
Gene Hessler





# Hey! Mister Horn Blower

Memoirs of a  
Life in Music and Numismatics



Things to Come

**Gene Hessler**

"To be a musician is a curse. To not be one is even worse."

- Jack Daney

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## **Dedication**

These words are dedicated to my sister Charlotte,  
and the memory of my brother Jack and  
our parents Clara and Joseph Hessler.



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## Foreword

I'VE KNOWN GENE HESSLER for only about seven years, but after reading this personal, social, and cultural memoir I feel as if I've known him all my life. He is not a celebrity, just a smart and multi-talented German American who grew up in a mostly German American working class Catholic suburb of Cincinnati during the Great Depression and World War II. But in the 1940s he started on the construction of two fabulous careers, one as an accomplished musician—jazz, popular, and classical—(a rare combination of genres in the mid-20th century), and later as a world class expert on the history, design and engraving of coins and paper money issued by central governments, ancient and modern, all over the globe. (Hessler has published in this field, numismatics, five award winning books, one in its seventh edition, and over 350 articles in numismatic journals and magazines.)

Hessler is also an earnest explorer of cities, and carries impressive urban experience credentials. He has lived and worked in hundreds of them, which if listed would stretch north and south and east and west from Toledo to Tokyo. He went to many of them as a member of a band dispatched on a tour of Africa in the 1960s, and many more with the Cincinnati Symphony's round the world tour (also in the 1960s) of major cities, both jaunts, of course, aspects of the cultural front during the Cold War competition between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Hessler's pursuit of his dual careers also took him to a host of American cities, large and small. Some of them he hit with big bands, including the Woody Herman band, Elliott Lawrence, and the legendary Sauter-Finegan group, which did not survive long enough, yet left deep and lasting impressions on dedicated jazz musicians and their serious followers (jazzophiles, Hessler calls them). Hessler also spent considerable time as a musician in New York City, "The Apple" to him and his hipster friends, and as a money museum curator for The Chase Manhattan Bank, an aspect of his numismatic career that also took him to St. Louis where he was curator of the Mercantile Bank Money Museum after he put his trombone aside for a life in the world of numismatics.

In New York and elsewhere Hessler participated in a broad range

of musical performances and worked with an astonishingly long list of performers. He played in pit orchestras for fourteen Broadway musicals, including *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Annie*, and the *Music Man*, and recounts for us amusing stage and pit stories on many of those jobs. On the classical side, he performed not only in the Cincinnati Symphony, but also in other orchestras, including the New York, Brooklyn, and Leningrad Philharmonic, and worked under the batons of about fifteen conductors, including Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland, Arthur Fiedler, and Leopold Stokowski. And the list of jazz musicians with whom he played goes on and on and on, from Julian “Cannonball” Adderly to Doc Severinsen to Buddy Rich.

Now in his eighties, slender, fit, and still sporting the van Dyke beard he cultivated most of his adult life, Hessler lives in a condominium in a neighborhood not far from his home town suburb. These days he describes himself as a “sociable recluse,” a stance that gave him time to write this book while keeping a hand in numismatic study and publishing. As a memoirist he knows that readers like to know how things work, and how people use urban places and spaces in their working and leisure lives. He tells us how musicians and students of money got jobs, how they moved from one to another, with whom they hung out, and where, how they made residential choices, and how they got into and out of institutions and associations important in their careers. And he reminds us that government helped him and others along the way, most notably through the G.I. Bill, which democratized American higher education and made him the first member of the Hessler family and the Hessler clan to take a college degree (he took two, and started on a third). In the army during the Korean War Hessler instructed musicians before they were assigned to army bands.

This manuscript also teems with anecdotes, funny, melancholy, and some simply illuminating. Most of these derive from Hessler’s various jobs as a working musician and from his experiences in “rehearsal bands,” informal groups (including big bands) made up of musicians who wrote arrangements and played them privately for sheer enjoyment. But his numismatic profession also yields a few. These include an account of his deal (a lucrative one) with an internationally famous paper money artist (so good an artist that his drawings became collectible and aroused suspicions of

counterfeiting) and the story of his nomination for a Peabody Award for a radio script he wrote about a 19th century master of the art of bogus money making.

In addition, Hessler has compiled a large collection of illustrations for the book. He once considered photography as a profession and he used his considerable skill in that area to take thousands of pictures during his travels. He also dabbled in drawing and abstract oil painting.

Hessler has also embellished the book with sidebars, vignettes connected with particular events in the text, and appendices. One side bar consists of the short radio script mentioned above. The major appendix describes and analyses the debilitating erosion since the 1920s of jobs in jazz and traditional popular music.

Finally, Hessler writes candidly about his personal life. He reflects on his bout with a brief lack of self confidence, his religious crisis and how he resolved it. He tells us that he once practiced golf in Manhattan on the roof of his apartment building by hitting a whiffle ball attached to a string anchored near his foot. He mentions some women in his life, his various romances (none of which led to marriage, to his mother's chagrin), and also about women musicians, including not only the many singers with whom he worked (including Billie Holiday during her last performance, Betty Clooney, Nina Simone, Eileen Farrell, and Joan Sutherland at her American debut) but also the Italian speaking harpist who tutored him in Italian prior to his trip to Italy. The book ends with a stirring quotation from *Side Man*, a Tony Award winning drama about the life of a jazz trumpeter and friend, a selection that testifies to the emotional depth of Hessler's life-long passion for jazz.

Straightforwardly written in jargon-free prose, this book will inform and entertain a broad range of general readers, especially jazz, classical, and Broadway musical buffs and numismatists here and abroad. It will also serve as a primary source in future analyses of American cities and their social and cultural dimensions, and will in addition appeal to today's scholars in a variety of academic disciplines, including not only urban history and urban studies but also American Studies, geography, sociology and, of course, music history.

Readers of this memoir will long remember Hessler and his



remarkable versatility, for in addition to other activities mentioned above he played banjo and guitar as a child, he also tap danced and sang with one of the big bands he worked with, and honed hard earned skills as a virtuoso musical sight reader.

Zane L. Miller, Charles Phelps Taft Professor of History Emeritus.  
University of Cincinnati

## Preface

MY NEPHEW DAN HESSLER followed his father, my brother Jack, as a drummer. Having an interest in jazz, he urged me to document my life for family and friends. Then, during one of our many conversations about jazz and those who practiced this art form, historian, friend and jazzophile, Dr. Zane Miller also asked me to write a memoir. To accomplish this I dictated my reflections into a tape recorder and Pam, Dan's wife transcribed the tape. The original words have gone through a number of revisions and the result is what follows.

My music studies began when I was in the second or third grade; I took banjo lessons, later guitar and ultimately trombone when in the eighth grade. When I was about twelve my family went to the Schubert Theater at Seventh and Walnut in Cincinnati to hear Glenn Miller, one of the most popular dance bands in the country whose orchestra was engaged for one week and played between showings of the movie, a custom at that time. Music had always been important to me however, I had an epiphany during that stage show: I knew that was what I was *compelled* to do. The amount of money that musicians made never occurred to me. I assumed whatever the amount was paid to musicians would be sufficient. The experience of seeing and hearing Glenn Miller's band and listening to music over the radio was my introduction to the music that I would follow. In addition to studying music I never tired of singing the Latin mass as part of the choir at Assumption Church. This also affected my musical interest.

Miller and most traveling dance bands had similar instrumentation: three or four trumpets, three trombones, five saxophones and a standard rhythm section that consisted of piano, bass and drums. (Count Basie used guitar as part of the rhythm section.) In addition, every band had at least one vocalist and some had both male and female singers. Glenn Miller's unique sound came from the lead alto saxophone player who often played clarinet as the lead voice above the other four saxophones.

My introduction to jazz came from my brother-in-law Lou Giordullo. His brother had a string of juke boxes in the African-American neighborhoods of Cincinnati and when the records were

changed, Lou brought them to our house when he was dating my sister Charlotte. For the first time I heard Louis Armstrong's *West End Blues*, Count Basie's *Jumpin' at the Woodside*, and recordings by Chick Webb, Earl Hines, and other good bands, most of them African-American.

Most people attend school, get a job or follow a profession, often the one of their father, and then retire. The life of a musician does not follow that scenario. My career as a professional musician began before I graduated from high school, and continued during my college years. I (like a few others of my acquaintance) was a working professional musician at sixteen and joined the Cincinnati Musicians Union<sup>1</sup> to work with Barney Rapp. Barney's band started in Connecticut in the 1920s and after traveling the country settled in Cincinnati in the early 1940s. There were mornings when I fell asleep in class because I had played a gig until early morning. In 1948, two years after I graduated from high school, I decided to pursue a degree in music education at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and the University of Cincinnati. Since I was out of funds after my first year of college, I dropped out of school to travel the country with the Elliott Lawrence big band (and while in New York City with this band I was taken to what jazz musicians considered the center of the universe, 52nd Street, a place I had heard about and wondered what it would be like to visit the numerous jazz clubs there. This is where I met the revolutionary bebop alto saxophonist Charlie Parker and trumpeter Red Rodney.) I next spent two years in the army (1951-1953) as a musician and played with alto saxophonist Julian "Cannonball" Adderly and his trumpet-playing brother, Nat, and pianist Junior Mance, among others. After that I returned to Cincinnati and school, and formed my own band. In the summer of 1954 I traveled with Billy May's band and after receiving my degree in 1955 went on the road that summer with Woody Herman's Herd before moving to New York City in the fall to work professionally as a musician and also to pursue a master's degree at the Manhattan School of Music.

These patterns of school and work continued for the next few years. I spent two seasons with the San Antonio Symphony, but decided to return to and remain in New York. My work venues included the orchestra at the Radio City Music Hall, free-lance work



that included concerts, recording, and pit orchestras for Broadway musicals (including my favorites, the *Music Man* and *Camelot*). And while working as a musician in New York City, I once more became a part-time student by starting on (but not completing) a PhD. in Music Education at Columbia University Teachers College.

In short, I was a student at different periods during the time I worked as a professional musician, a useful fact to remember while reading the first few chapters of this book. The title of this memoir also requires an explanation. In 1959, on closing night of a week with Buddy Rich at the Apollo Theater in Harlem I was the last musician to leave the theater. The entrance to the Apollo is on New York's 125th Street, Harlem's "Main Street." The stage entrance, as I remember, was on a dimly lit no outlet street at the rear of the building. As I approached the corner that would have taken me to 125th Street I heard a voice from a doorway. Since I was carrying my trombone the lady of the evening addressed me by saying "Hey! Mister Horn Blower." I smiled at the faceless female in the dark doorway and continued on my way. I passed on that offer, if that's what it was, but remained, as in my rather opportunistic past, willing to embrace other career chances that might serendipitously drift into my orbit.

*I Was Never a Star* or *I Just Happened to be There* would have been good titles for this memoir, but the latter was already taken by Nick Perito, famous arranger and accompanist. Perito, a star in the music world was being humble when he selected this title even though many of his arrangements were recorded by numerous singers including Frank Sinatra, Perry Como and Dean Martin. Though I consider myself a competent musician I was never a star and I just happened to be there when some good music was made with some good musicians.

I also considered for this memoir a parenthetical sub-title, one that refers to the usual instructions for musicians if working in a restaurant or club to enter "through the kitchen." Unless one is a star performer or the "star of the month" rock and roll musician, sidemen musicians are seldom recognized as being important, similar to the lives of unrewarded teachers, who in *Teacher Man* Frank McCourt refers to as "the downstairs maid of professions." Musicians were only to be seen when heard. Nevertheless, at theater stage doors

and when we exited the bandstand at ballrooms and clubs there often were groupies hanging around. With theater musicians being augmented and thusly replaced by the digital virtual orchestra (synthesizer), theater musicians are becoming endangered. The synthesizer is an electronic device that can replicate the sound of not only one instrument but an entire band or orchestra, and so accurately that the replication sounds like the real thing.

My dream of becoming a professional musician was fulfilled beyond expectations. I lived in four different cities (residing at five different locations in New York City) and traveled to hundreds of cities throughout the world and experienced the urban similarities and differences in each when I traveled with the big bands of Les Elgart, Sauter-Finegan, and those previously mentioned, and on two U.S. State Department tours, one with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. As I have often said, I saw the world and was paid for it. Most of my professional music life was spent in New York City and New Milford, New Jersey, a bedroom community for many who worked in Manhattan. Some musicians lived nearby but most of my neighbors were professionals who worked in New York City. While living in and near New York City I was fortunate to participate in just about every type of musical venue, *i.e.*, big bands, small groups, jazz and classical, Broadway musicals, recordings, television commercials, the orchestra at the Radio City Music Hall, classical and jazz concerts, gigs as an extra with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, and the Leningrad Philharmonic and Bolshoi Ballet Orchestra when they performed in New York City. It's true, how do you get to Carnegie Hall? Practice. As I elaborate on the preceding I hope to convey what the life of a musician includes—the good, the bad, there was never an ugly.

Performing in Africa in 1964 I was in countries just before, during, and after independence was granted. One example was Northern Rhodesia when it became Zambia. I was in (Southern) Rhodesia just before the minority white government claimed independence. A black colleague was refused service when he and I entered a restaurant in Rhodesia. Now, as Zimbabwe the country has gone in the opposite direction and is imploding under the maniacal Robert Mugabe. The country, as I remember it would not be recognizable to me now. Two years later I was fortunate to join the Cincinnati Symphony



Orchestra for a world tour that began in Greece and ended in South Korea. The cold war was on and music was the best ambassador to send to Africa and around the world.

Some gigs were more enjoyable than others; some were accepted to pay the bills; others were so enjoyable that monetary remuneration seemed like a bonus for having so much fun and receiving so much musical satisfaction. Along the way I performed with musicians such as trombonists Urbie Green, and Charlie Small, trumpeter Doc Severinsen, saxophonist, arranger and leader Gerry Mulligan and drummer Buddy Rich, musicians that I idolized and respected, and performed under the batons of Leonard Bernstein, Leopold Stokowski and others. I met interesting people who were not musicians including Gene Shalit, Hugh Downs, and Groucho Marx, and traveled to distant places far beyond Chicago, that as a three-year-old child I thought was the most remote place in the world.

In New York I hung out at several watering holes—Joe Harbor's Spotlight, Jim & Andy's, Junior's, and the Carnegie Tavern—places where musicians congregated. We didn't solve the world's problems but did exchange ideas and opinions about almost everything, heard about and accepted gigs, and relaxed over a glass of booze.

The recordings we listen to and performances (jazz and classical) that we attend are by trained musicians, many of whom will never be known to most listeners. Here is a personal example. During one of my infrequent summer trips to Cincinnati after I moved to New York City, I went to Winton Woods to hear a local band play an outdoor concert. When I arrived during a break I saw trombonist Bill Rank (1904-1979) sitting alone drinking a cup of coffee; at the time Bill was in his 70s. Bill settled in Cincinnati after a career that went back to Paul Whitman, Jean Goldkette and Frank Trumbauer when Bill worked with Bix Beiderbecke. I knew Bill from the time I lived in Cincinnati so we talked for a while. This man, who had worked with the jazz greats in the 1920s and 1930s sat alone and passersby had no idea who he was.

Music and money do not necessarily go together. However, they did come together in my life, but not in the manner that you might assume. Many of the greatest and most talented musicians did not enjoy the benefits of comfortable salaries. I never earned salaries that could be considered out of the ordinary for a musician. As I

said previously: it was the satisfaction that was important.

Later, during my musical career I found enjoyment and some recognition from my interest in documenting the history and the lives and the work of engravers of paper money and other security instruments, *e.g.*, stock certificates and bonds, all part of the broad study of numismatics. While researching this subject I met numerous talented artists who engraved the paper money that we and people in other countries handled and spent. Over the next forty years the numismatic knowledge that I garnered from research was published in five books and hundreds of magazine articles. This interest led me to two curatorial positions: The Chase Manhattan Bank Money Museum in New York City, while I continued to work as a musician, and the Mercantile Bank Money Museum in St. Louis. Both museums had major numismatic collections that I cared for and purchased acquisitions for each. In addition, with pieces from the museums I created exhibits that were topical and some related to the area that would draw people to the museums. I arrived in St. Louis in 1986 just in time to assemble an exhibit to honor the centennial and the renovation of the *Statue of Liberty*. A number of coins, bank notes and stock certificates have images of *Lady Liberty*.

Through my research of engravers and engraving I was fortunate to become friends with some of the best engravers in the world including, Tom Hipschen in the U.S., Joe Keen, Stanley Doubtfire, and Alan Dow in England, and Agnes Miski-Török in Sweden.

Along the way I met J.S.G. Boggs, an artist who creates images that closely resembles the paper money of a few countries including the U.S. He has been tried for counterfeiting but never convicted, but the U.S. Secret Service watches him closely. They have yet to return confiscated materials that include drawings, sketches, paper and ink.

I discovered the joy of volunteer teaching at the Cathedral School in St. Louis, and later at two schools in Cincinnati. By introducing colorful paper money from around the world to students in grades five through eight, I tried to expand their knowledge of history and geography by discussing the history of money, the iconography that made up the designs and how and why the portraits of famous people from other countries are placed on paper money in recognition for their accomplishments in art, music, poetry and medicine.

After a few years in St. Louis with personal music performance all but closeted—my personal choice—I decided to return to Cincinnati where I have a sister, nieces and nephews. It seemed like the right thing to do at the time as I approached my seventh decade. Many people work at a job they dislike and count the days until retirement. I have had two professions and enjoyed both and continue to be active in the second. I am grateful for all the good things that happened to me during my lifetime and can honestly say that I am one of the fortunate ones.

During my careers as musician and numismatist I participated in some “firsts” and some “lasts.” I was in the orchestra for soprano Joan Sutherland’s first concert in the U.S. and Billie Holiday’s last. In Cincinnati my band was the last to play at Listerman’s night club before it closed, and I performed with the Symphony of the Air (NBC Symphony) when Leopold Stokowski conducted the orchestra’s final concert before it was dissolved. In my second life I was the first curator for the St. Louis Mercantile Money Museum and the last for The Chase Manhattan Bank Money Museum.

I sincerely hope that my memory has been accurate throughout this discourse and not according to Mark Twain who said his memory was so good that he remembered things that didn’t even happen. Throughout the following pages the terms perform, play, work and gig all refer to the same thing. Play is something we do for enjoyment. When a musician plays an instrument, most often he or she enjoys what is their livelihood, their work. However, to a non-musician, work is not play.

I have often said that I am one of the most fortunate people on the face of the earth. I fulfilled my dreams by performing with many of my idols. Some of the things that happened to me and places I visited around the world were beyond my dreams. I can honestly say that I did just about everything I wanted to do. Yes, I have been extremely fortunate and I am grateful. Beryl Markham, a talented writer, once remarked that “If a man has any greatness in him, it comes to light, not in one flamboyant hour, but in the ledger of his daily work.” I will not claim greatness. However, what I contributed in my dual careers, and how I did it, will, I hope prove interesting to readers and will be considered a notch or two above mediocrity.<sup>2</sup>

I wish to thank Pam Hessler for transcribing the first draft of this



manuscript, Zane Miller, Patricia Grignet Nott, Warren Herminghaus, Carlton F. Schwan and my grandniece Stephanie Spencer for reading the manuscript and making changes and suggestions

Throughout these pages there are references to incidents and humorous stories that circulated among musicians. Many of these have appeared in Bill Crow's Band Room column in *Allegro*, the monthly paper for the Associated Musicians of Greater New York, Local 802. Some of these vignettes have also been published in *Jazz Anecdotes* also by Bill Crow (New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990). I witnessed some of these events, others I have heard over and over and these could have been published in the early days of the Band Room column that began in 1983. Bill said I am free to use these stories as they are gifts from musicians and he only passes them on. Bill refers to the column as a "literary Charlie's Tavern," a bar where musicians congregated in New York City. The building has since been demolished.

Some photos seen throughout the following pages might cause some sequential confusion. I began to lose my hair at about 16, so, by the time I was in my late 20s most of my wavy hair had waved goodbye. Raymond Paige, the conductor at the Radio City Music Hall insisted on a youthful-looking orchestra. To work there it was necessary to alter my appearance. A friend in a similar position knew an artistic maker of hairpieces and sent me there. Consequently, some photos taken after I had donned a hairpiece maker me look younger than I did in earlier photos. With few exceptions, people that met me after I began wearing a hairpiece didn't know that the hair on my head was not my own. A few years after I left The Chase Manhattan Bank Money Museum I decided to simplify my life in all ways, including discarding the hairpiece.



## Chapter I

### An Urban Musical Childhood, Growing up in Cincinnati

I WAS FORTUNATE enough to have been born in and to have grown up near a large American city that, unlike small towns and rural areas, offered abundant choices for ordinary people seeking economic and cultural opportunities. Mt. Healthy, Ohio, with a population of about 3000 at the time of my birth was just twelve miles north of downtown Cincinnati. Consequently, I had the good fortune to live in a small community with easy access by bus or auto to a major city. I often say that I am one of the most fortunate people on the face of the earth. With a few exceptions I have done everything I wanted to do. This is not a boastful statement, just confirmation of my good fortune.

In the same year that Walt Disney gave cinematic life to Mickey Mouse, and Louis Armstrong recorded his masterpiece and pivotal recording of *West End Blues*, my entry into this world, I was told, came at precisely 1:00 a.m. on Friday, July 13, 1928 in my parent's house on Elizabeth Street in Mount Healthy, Ohio. Unless there were indications of possible complications, hospital births were not an option for working class people in 1928. I am not superstitious so I adopted my birth date, 13, as my lucky number. Many years later I could never understand why so many Americans consider 13 as an unlucky number, considering our country originally had 13 colonies; there are 13 stripes on our current flag; and the back of the \$1 bill has numerous symbols that add up to 13. (Thirteen tail feathers on the eagle; 13 stars and stripes on the shield; 13 berries and leaves in the olive branch and 13 arrows in the eagle's claws; 13 letters in *E PLURIBUS UNUM*; 13 steps on the pyramid; and 13 letters in *ANNUIT COEPTIS*. [HE (GOD) HAS SMILED ON OUR UNDERTAKINGS.]) Unknowingly, those who are superstitious carry symbols of 13 in their pockets most of the time.

One of my earliest memories must have been when I was about three or four years old. There was a party in our basement on Elizabeth Street in Mt. Healthy, and to mimic Tarzan, whom I guess I had seen in a comic strip or heard about, I decided to entertain everyone. I had put on a pair of underpants that my mother had dyed purple, at my request. Standing there showing off my physique,

another kid a few years older than I gave me a shove and of course I fell backwards: into a tub of ice water that contained beer and soda pop. My vanity was shattered, not to mention my freezing posterior. Ice was delivered to our house for the "ice box." It was about the age of my fanny freezing that a refrigerator came into our kitchen. Ice cream was made on the back porch in an ice cream maker that required turning a handle crank that required communal muscle and determination.

More than once I heard people say that before we die everybody will eat a peck of dirt; they were of course referring to minute bits of dirt from vegetables and fruit that were not thoroughly cleaned. One day, at the age of three, I was playing in the sandbox in the back of the house and I thought I would begin to eat my share of dirt. I had a large spoon and I dug into the sand and swallowed the entire spoonful of sand. I guess at that age I was not able to distinguish between what was mandatory and what was inevitable.

The world outside my immediate surroundings was a mystery to me. From conversations and references to events, local and beyond, I knew that something existed beyond what I could see around me, but what? I remember lying on the grass in the backyard, just outside the sandbox in the summer watching the moving clouds and always thinking they went to Chicago, a place I had heard about and assumed it was some exotic place at the end of the earth.

At age three or four, my father, who always carried a pocketknife, as most men did at the time, called me into the dining room. There, he would make a throwing motion as though he threw the knife through the closed dining room window. I would run outside, retrieve the knife and return it to my father inside the house. I would ask him to do it again, and again. It took me a long time to discover that my father simply opened the window and dropped the knife on the ground and then closed the window as I ran outside. Until I understood what he was doing I thought he was a magician.

My upbringing was typical of the period. I had strict but loving parents; my father, Joseph August Hessler (1899-1986) worked as a tailor and my mother, Clara M. (Schmidt) Hessler (1898-1973) was a housewife. Neither of my parents finished grammar school. My mother was nurturer and protector; who provided comfort when I was a child. My father was the disciplinarian and was strict, but



fair in his dealings with me and my siblings. He mellowed as he became older. As a child I remember my father taking off his belt and whipping me only twice. This was a common practice at the time. Decades later Charlotte, Jack and I were grateful for the love our parents demonstrated and the discipline that was instilled in us; it made us responsible people. To quote Winston Churchill, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."



**Parents, Joseph and Clara Hessler ca. 1920**

The atmosphere at home was not an intellectual one but one based on respect and the use of common sense. I doubt if my father ever read a book for pleasure or for any other reason. Books were not in evidence in our house. Consequently, I did not discover the joy of reading until about the age of 20. The six-room house we lived in on Elizabeth Street was built when my parents were married in 1921. My father told me it cost \$5000 to have the house built. Born in Mt. Healthy both of my parents came from German heritage. However, only my mother spoke German, but I seldom heard it spoken at home. Lots of German Americans lived in Mt. Healthy, not to mention Cincinnati, but I was never aware of an overt German influence in Mt. Healthy.

If there were gatherings and events that celebrated Germans and Germany I do not remember them. I think Mt. Healthy was like many communities in the United States that shunned anything Germanic to prove their loyalty during and after World War I. As a child I remember my father and other elders making references

to a particular person as a “Dutchman.” I came to realize that they were talking about someone who was German. Decades later I made the association of the word dutchman with deutsch, the word for German. One has no connection with the other than the similar-sounding words that were mispronounced and over time became an improper identification.

Most of my relatives also lived on Elizabeth Street.<sup>1</sup> One exception was my mother’s brother, my Uncle George, who lived on Colerain Avenue near Galbraith Road. He owned a hardware store near the northwest corner of Colerain Avenue and North Bend road. My family often went to my uncle’s store on Fridays just before closing, and then, if we hadn’t eaten, went to a nearby restaurant for a fish sandwich—the typical Friday dinner for Catholics at the time—or ate at the home of Uncle George and Aunt Ida; she shared my date of birth. I looked forward to those visits to a store with bins of nails, screws, bolts, etc.; all those multiples fascinated me. Multiples and stacks of “things” still fascinate me. The Hessler relation was close and I remember visiting with all my uncles and aunts and their families often. As a child it seemed that the neighborhood never changed. People seldom moved away and when they did it was an event.

The occasional thirty-minute bus trip to downtown Cincinnati with my mother was always exciting. Department stores including Shillito’s, Pogue’s, McAlpin’s and Mabley & Carew were usually the destinations of these adventurous trips to the city. Alms & Doepke was farther north on Central Parkway. When my mother made a purchase, clerks put the payment into a cylinder that was placed inside a pneumatic tube that rushed the little missile through one of the many tubes that went through the ceiling to a central location in the building. Then, a few minutes later the little cylinder that contained the receipt and change was returned to the clerk via one of the tubes as though it was shot from an air gun. At three or four years of age, going up and down an escalator for the first time in one of the department stores was almost like being on a ride at an amusement park.

Mt. Healthy was originally called Mount Pleasant. However, there was another Mount Pleasant in northern Ohio; consequently the name was changed before I was born. The Mount Pleasant of my



background can be traced to 1793. Cincinnati is almost surrounded by hills, Mount Pleasant among them. In the 1850s there was a cholera epidemic and many Cincinnatians fled to the hills around Cincinnati, assuming the air would be healthier. Everyone who fled to Mount Pleasant survived, consequently, the name of the retreat on the hill was designated as Mt. Healthy.

The locale of my birthplace has another distinction; it was a stopover location for slaves on the journey by way of the Underground Railroad. In 1999 Charles Cheney was recognized by having his name added to a street sign in Mt. Healthy. Mr. Cheney housed slaves on their first stop on the northern side of the Ohio River. "His son Frank had vivid recollections of riding beside his father with slaves hidden behind them in the wagon on their way to the next station." Other Mt. Healthy names associated with the Underground Railroad were Alexander Luse, a Mr. Hastings and Dr. Scott.<sup>2</sup>

Mt. Healthy had a population of a few thousand people when I was a child. The northern part of my neighborhood ended just beyond Adams Road about five blocks from where I lived. At that northern point was the Summe Dairy, where, to save money, people with large families could purchase milk that would be poured into containers brought to the dairy. Milk and butter were delivered to our house at an early hour by a driver of a Summe truck. About 7:00 each morning a bakery truck came through the neighborhood, just in time for my mother to purchase a coffee cake for breakfast and bread for later meals.

With supermarkets far into the future, mothers went to the grocery and requested items from a prepared list. The person behind the counter retrieved items from different shelves. It was not uncommon for housewives to place an order to the grocery store over the telephone, and then a store employee would deliver the orders. If no one was at home, the delivery person would place the order on the kitchen table; the back door was most often left open. The bill was paid at the end of the week. One day there was a delivery from Schaefer's grocery while my mother was outside hanging wash to dry, and I was inside. When I saw that box on the counter I stood on a chair and reached into the box and discovered there was some butter, and I happened to be very fond of butter. So I took the stick of butter, peeled away the paper, and proceeded to suck on the

butter like a Popsicle. I must have eaten half of it when my mother came in from outside and, out of concern for my health, took it out of my four-year-old hands. I did not become ill.

The radio provided most of our entertainment. I feel fortunate to have grown up at a time when entertainment required the listener to participate by visualizing what was heard. Like other kids my age I was addicted to radio shows for kids including *Little Orphan Annie* (which originated from WGN in Chicago in 1930 and became a national program on NBC from 1931-1950. I will revisit *Annie* forty years later as a New York musician.) Additional radio shows included *Captain Midnight*, the *Lone Ranger* and *Jack Armstrong, the All American Boy*, a student at Hudson High, wherever that was. The latter radio show ran from 1933-1950, and Jack Armstrong remained in high school long enough to earn three diplomas. No one questioned this protracted setting.

These radio shows and musical scores for early movies “borrowed” from classical compositions. Most often it was music of Debussy, Tchaikovsky and Wagner we heard as film background music. Just about everyone loved the *Lone Ranger* theme, which was the overture to Rossini’s *William Tell*. *Valse Triste* by Jean Sibelius was the theme for *I Love a Mystery*. Unknowingly, those who said they did not like classical music enjoyed these themes and movie scores, all from the classical genre.

The earliest movie I remember seeing was *China Seas*. This 1935 film starred Jean Harlow, Clark Gable, Wallace Beery and Rosalind Russell. I saw it at the Main Theater in Mt. Healthy near the southeast corner of Hamilton and Kinney Avenues. This little movie house with about 150 seats was opened in 1915 by Peter Blum, and probably closed in the 1950s. Most often my movie attendance was limited to weekends. Nevertheless, if schoolwork was finished, my father sometimes acquiesced and gave me the necessary fifteen cents for a movie during the week. On Saturdays my friends and I looked forward to seeing how the hero would survive what we thought was his demise in the previous episode in a continuing serial story. One of the first movies I saw, in what they called Technicolor at the time, was *By the Trail of the Lonesome Pine* with Henry Fonda. I saw it with my family in downtown Cincinnati at the Shubert Theater. (This could have been the movie that was playing when I saw Glenn



Miller and his orchestra as part of the stage show.)

Coming attractions at the Main Theater were announced by projecting still images on the screen from the projection booth. These images were on glass positives that were about four by four inches. When these glass images accumulated they were discarded and placed in the trash behind the theater. I remember seeing and handling these glass plates behind the Main Theater during my grammar school years and now wonder why I didn't keep these valuable collectibles. If I had put them aside, they probably would have disappeared along with my "big little" books and toys that are now considered collectibles.

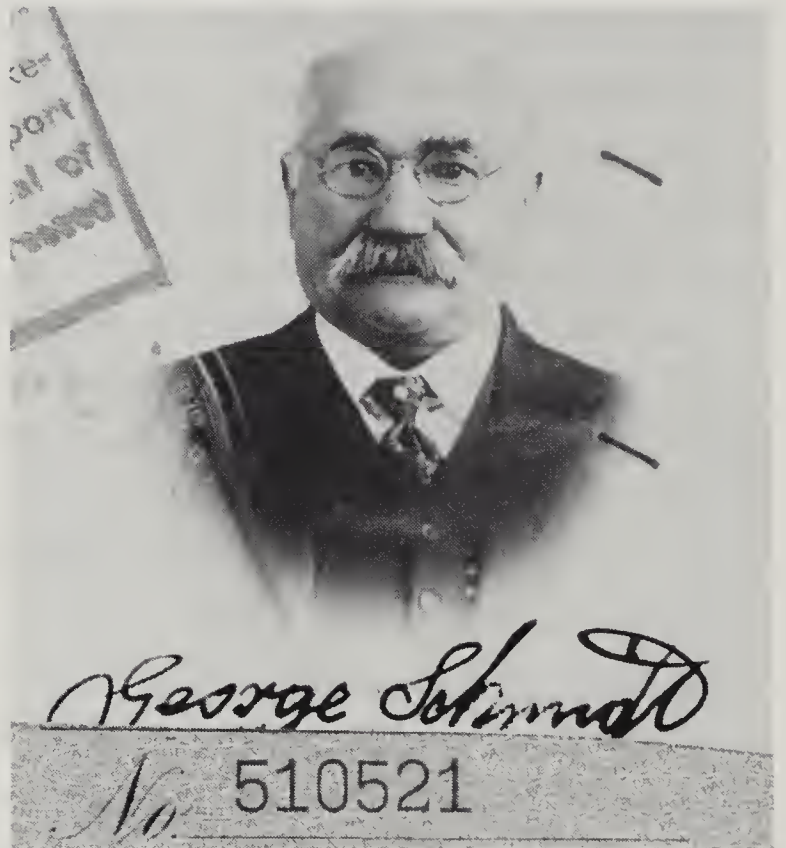
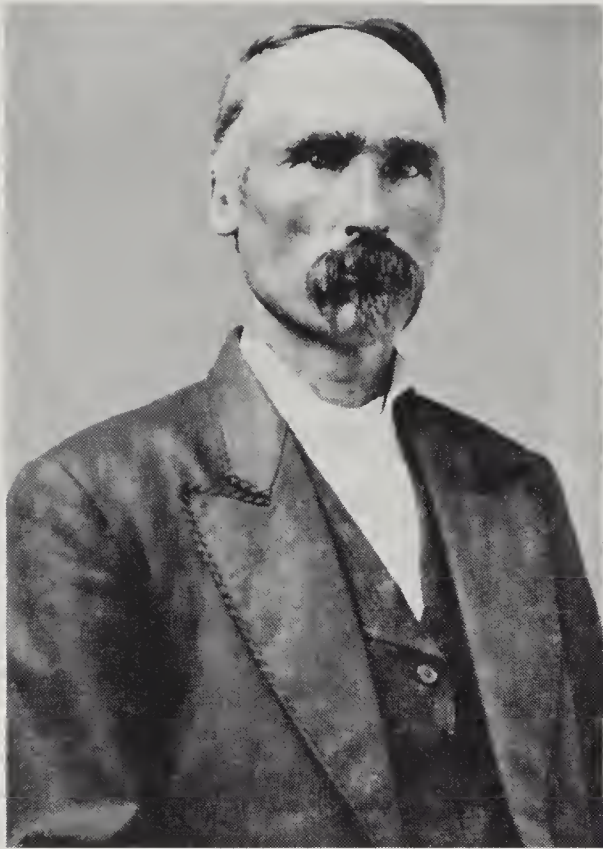
My mother, my Uncle Tone (Anthony) and several of my aunts played piano. Consequently, when family members would gather someone would play the piano; all my relatives had pianos in their living rooms. Most of these were player pianos that made music from piano rolls. I couldn't play the piano, but some of us enjoyed pushing the foot pedals that made the piano rolls turn. Of my relatives who played piano, my Uncle Tone was the only one to play in a style that resembled ragtime, which I liked. There are musical genes on both sides of my family. However, the dominant ones are on my father's side.

Most towns and communities had bands that played marches and light classical music and Mt. Healthy was no exception. My father told me that when he was young there was a concert band that consisted primarily of Hesslers and Webers. I have been told that Conrad Hessler, my earliest ancestor who came to the U.S. from Germany in 1838 aboard the *Mathilda*, went to Cincinnati to sell some cows and returned with a wagon full of musical instruments, purchased with the money from the sale. He then proceeded to learn to play each of the instruments and then taught each of his children to play an instrument.

One of the early Hesslers played clarinet but never learned how to read music. My father said that when a new piece of music was played for the first time, the Hessler who played clarinet always had reed trouble or some other problem with his instrument. Then, after he heard the new piece, and his instrument was "fixed," he was ready to go and joined in playing the piece when the band played it the second time.



Hey! Mister Horn Blower



**Conrad Hessler and my maternal grandfather's passport photo.**



**Mt. Healthy concert band early 1900s. Front row: unknown, John Hessler (my grandfather), \_\_\_\_\_ Weber, Joseph Hessler, \_\_\_\_\_ Weber. Back row: Ed Hessler, \_\_\_\_\_ Weber, Harry Hessler, \_\_\_\_\_ Weber, Rob Semler, Wallie Weber, \_\_\_\_\_ Weber, Leopold Deer.**

William "Bonie" Bonapfel, who was married to my father's Aunt Anna, played the musical saw, an accepted instrument among many in the working class. To play the saw, the handle of a flexible saw was placed between the knees and one hand would grasp the end of the blade bending and manipulating it to create a higher or lower pitch as the other hand drew a violin bow was drawn against the



smooth edge of the blade. The sound was very much like a Theremin, an instrument that created the ethereal sound heard in the 1950s movie, *Spellbound* with Gregory Peck. This electronic instrument was invented by Russian scientist Leon Theremin.

I later discovered that the Theremin consisted of a box about the size of a medium sized television set with an interior of tubes and wires. The pitch was controlled by one hand and the volume by the other as the performer moved his or her hands toward or away from two metal appendages: one, vertically from the top and another, horizontally from the side.

William "Bonie" Bonapfel, was much like Will Rogers. He had a variety of folksy amusing sayings. In cold weather he would often say, "it's cold enough for an umbrella" or "it's cold enough for a brassiere." Bonie's house was just a few doors away where I often sat on his porch and listened to his stories. At Christmas he took the part of Santa Claus and frightened us when he visited our house on Christmas Eve. It never occurred to me that humorous Bonie was inside the Santa Claus suit.

Bill Bittner, another neighbor played spoons. In the early 19th century, imaginative slaves placed two bones from pork ribs between their fingers and manipulated them against one another to create rhythmic patterns. By substituting two spoons, one could create more sophisticated rhythmic patterns, and the metallic sound was more audible. I remember hearing a trio of a musical saw, spoons and piano in neighbors' living rooms.

The main street that runs north and south in Mt. Healthy is Hamilton Avenue, once the Hamilton Turnpike that linked Cincinnati to Hamilton. Hamilton Avenue was originally called Main Street. (Kinney Avenue was First Street, Compton Road was Second Street and McMakin was Third Street.) According to the 1905 Directory William Hessler, a son of my great grandfather, John M. Hessler, operated the *Big Gun Saloon* on Main near Second.

In my early years I remember that stores and businesses occupied three blocks on Hamilton Avenue between Stevens Avenue on the south and McMakin Street to the north, with a few places of business just beyond each of these boundaries. There were, as I remember, four grocery-butchers, three drug stores, two dry-goods (clothing) stores, a hardware store, a jeweler, two bakeries, two funeral homes,



**My paternal grandmother, Minnie, with her children. L to R: Anthony, Leona, Gus, my father, Estella and Carl.**

a few other privately-owned establishments, and two or three doctors. Ludwig's Shoe Store operated at the northwest corner of Hamilton Avenue and Compton Road; Joe Ludwig, the son of the owner was a classmate at Assumption School. In the 1940s my Uncle Gus, my father's brother, opened a Woolworth-type five-and-ten-cent store at 7605 Hamilton Avenue. Later he sold the business and opened a furniture store two blocks further north on Hamilton Avenue. A little over a mile further

north is the last covered bridge in Hamilton County.

When I was a small child there was one traffic light at the corner of Hamilton Avenue and Compton Road in Mt. Healthy. Now there are seven on Hamilton Avenue and additional lights at other side street intersections. Henry Wirth, whom everyone called "Heinie the cop," was a police force of one. As I recall, he served from 1926-1943. Joe Pierman became chief of police in 1943 and served until 1964.

Frank Denninger, who married my mother's sister Paula, was the service director for Mt. Healthy for 39 years until he retired in 1966. If anyone had a problem or trouble with village services they called Frank Denninger. For me he was just Uncle Frank who lived three blocks away on Elizabeth Street.

In addition to the Assumption School, Mt. Healthy had a grammar and high school. (The first school in Mt. Healthy was an early 19th century one-room log cabin on the northwest corner of Elizabeth Street and Compton Road, a few doors from where I lived.) Houses of worship included the Assumption, Methodist,





**My mother in a patriotic dress ca. 1915, and  
ca. 1920 with her twin sister, Anna, on the left.**



**My parents, Joseph and Clara Hessler on their  
50th wedding anniversary in 1971.**

Christian, United Brethren and Lutheran Churches. My paternal grandmother, Philaminae (Siegmund) Hessler, attended the latter at the corner of Hickman Street and Kinney Avenue. Everyone else in my extended family was a member of the Assumption Catholic Church. The first Assumption Church building was erected in 1854. The church I attended was constructed in 1870 from bricks made by parish members with borrowed equipment. The first Assumption School building was built in 1858. The one I attended was constructed in 1908. Both church and school have been replaced with new buildings.

In the late 1800s there were about 60 African-Americans in Mt. Healthy, enough to form a church on Perry Street. This small Methodist Episcopal congregation that received support from the Lexington Conference dwindled and was dissolved about the time of World War I. Random 19th century pictures of Mt. Healthy School classes document the integrated school system with one to three African-Americans in some classes. Blacks were not relegated to one section of Mt. Healthy; nevertheless, many lived near their church in the vicinity of Perry Street near Compton Road. As part of my early memory there were only a few black families in Mt. Healthy in the 1940s, however in the 1960s, after I moved away, there was an increase in the black population.

It was not uncommon in Mt. Healthy to hear the pejorative word for black people, as it was undoubtedly used in most of greater Cincinnati in the 1940s. By some it was not intended to have a derisive connotation; we just repeated what we heard. As I approached my teenage years and became more sensitive to ethnic designations I decided that Negro was more appropriate.

When death came to a household in Mount Healthy and other small communities it was customary for the deceased to be "laid out" in a casket in the parlor or living room of the home. A black wreath was placed on the door and out of respect, I remember seeing Catholics cross themselves and men tip their hats when they passed such a house. Living with the dead for a few days was an old world custom, one that I did not understand as a child.

Red Wirth operated a saloon at the northwest corner of Hamilton Avenue and McMakin Street. Years later I discovered there was a betting parlor in the back room. Although against the law, bookmakers



did operate in some communities; the police looked the other way. When I was about seventeen I went there with a friend and placed a fifty-cent bet on Sea Log, a 100-1 long shot. The horse won and I received about \$50, a sum that approached half of my father's weekly salary.

About 1940 one of the last traveling medicine shows came to Mount Healthy and held their captive audience on the upper floor of the building just mentioned. To legitimize themselves, the operator offered a diamond ring at the end of their two- or three-day program. The ring was purchased from or was donated in part by Effler Jewelers in return for the advertisement. I do not remember what the circumstance was to award the ring however, as I think about this situation I would not be surprised if the ring was switched before the troupe made their hasty exit from Mount Healthy.

The Mt. Healthy Historical Society is located on McMakin Street near Joseph Street. The society, organized in 1967, saved, moved and restored the Free Meeting House, which is now a museum, and the Toll House, a point of collection on the Hamilton Turnpike Co. (At a Mt. Healthy Historical Society monthly meeting in 2004 I spoke about the history of paper money, and the paper money that was issued by the First National Bank of Mt. Healthy.) The first location for the bank was at the southeast corner of McMakin Street and Hamilton Avenue; the bank was organized on February 24, 1905. It moved to the northeast corner of Compton Road and Hamilton and when it moved to the southwest corner of Kinney and Hamilton Avenues, the previous location was occupied by Esses Dry Goods. For a while in the 1960s Bob Westrich, a grammar and high school classmate was manager of the bank in Mt. Healthy.

As a child, I remember walking to another bank on the east side of Hamilton Avenue between Compton Road and Kinney Avenue with an envelope that contained payment and interest on a loan my father had arranged with the bank. This could have been the bank that opened in 1924 and was later purchased by the Second National Bank of Cincinnati.

Growing up in Mt. Healthy in the 1930s couldn't be compared to a Tom Sawyer-type existence. Nevertheless, there were childhood adventures, real and imagined, in backyards, vacant lots and ponds where we caught sunfish with bits of bread dough on tiny hooks.

And, I do remember making up games and creating crude forms of transportation: two 2x4s connected at a right angle with a separated clamp-on roller skate nailed to the bottom. It was pleasurable to remove shoes and run barefoot outside. All too often I stepped in tar, softened by the summer sun that repaired cracks and crevasses in the street near my house. Before I could enter the house my mother removed the tar from between my toes with a rag soaked in kerosene as she pleaded with me not to do this again.

I always thought of Mt. Healthy as a typical small, friendly town where everyone knew their neighbors, similar to Garrison Keillor's Lake Wobegone. *A Family Affair*, the first Andy Hardy movie with Mickey Rooney hit the screen in 1937. I enjoyed watching this series at the Main Theater and always compared my hometown to the one where Andy Hardy lived with his father (Lewis Stone) who was a judge.

Mt. Healthy had a few luminaries including Mayor, Prosecutor and Judge Carson Hoy (1902-1966). His father was William E. "Dummy" Hoy, a deaf mute who had a successful career in baseball including time with the Cincinnati Reds. Ballerina Suzanne Farrell, who attended Assumption School, the school I attended, and artist Robert Duncan were two other people who lived in Mt. Healthy and gained national recognition.

No one in my family smoked tobacco, however, it was common for children, at the request of a parent, to walk to the drug store and purchase cigarettes or tobacco. As a pre-teen I remember walking to the Stag Café on Compton Road just west of Hamilton Avenue with a quart-size enameled pale, as some of my classmates and friends did, to have the container filled with beer for my father. This would not be tolerated today. However, at the time parents trusted their children and proprietors of drug stores and saloons trusted them as well.

On Easter Sunday most mothers and daughters wore a new dress and hat to church service. For this annual event my father, who was a tailor usually made trousers for my brother and me. This would be matched with a new sweater.

Most small communities, including Mt. Healthy had chapters of fraternal and patriotic organizations including the American Legion, a Masonic Lodge, the Fraternal Order of Eagles (F.O.E.),



Kiwanis, Knights of Columbus and others. My father did not smoke, nevertheless, he was a member of the Smokers Casino, a club that met monthly at the Stag Café. This reminds me of my father's ubiquitous reference to *Johnny Smoker*. If a statement of approval for or a comparison with a musical performance was made, my father would most often say he or she sounds as good as *Johnny Smoker*. Or, he would make reference to the days when he played with *Johnny Smoker*. We all laughed and assumed this was a figment of my father's imagination. Many years later I discovered that *Johnny Smoker* was a musical round similar to *Old McDonald* except in this instance Johnny played the horn, then the drum, the triangle and ultimately he smokes his pipe. *Johnny Smoker* and "what the hotel," a statement of confusion, surprise or wonderment were my father's favorite phrases to use.

My father, his brothers and many neighbors belonged to the F.O.E. 2193 located on Kinney Avenue west of Hamilton Avenue, which held Saturday night dances for members and their families. With my family I attended these get-togethers where they had bands of about six musicians that played for dancing. Pete Accurso, a talented harmonica player, and close friend of my future brother-in-law, Lou Giordullo, often played at these dances. For a while Pete traveled with groups similar to the Harmonicats, a popular entertaining and recording ensemble that consisted of about eight harmonica players. This group also appeared in a few movies. Harmonica groups lost their popularity and Pete returned to Cincinnati and became a bus driver, but continued playing the harmonica on weekends.

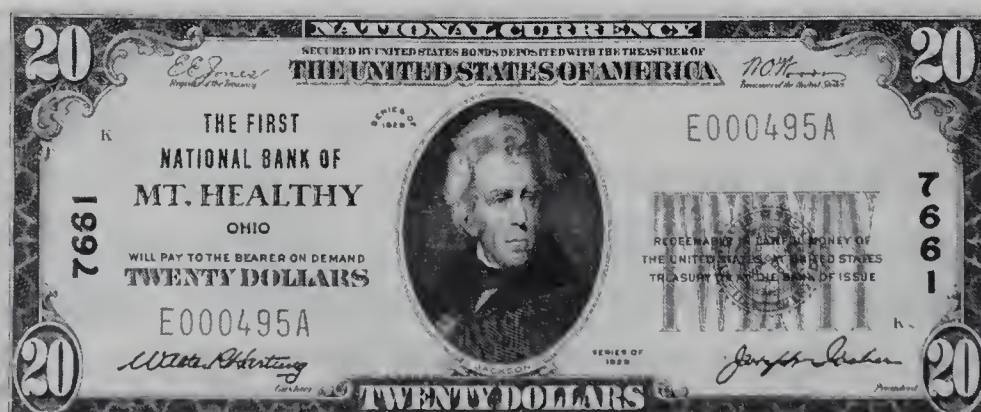
I had a love for music for as long as I can remember. Music that I heard on the radio, mostly cowboy tunes that I associated with cowboy movies, was my first influence. What was called "hillbilly music" was also prominent on the airwaves around Cincinnati. My later appreciation for Blue Grass music could have come from exposure to this type of music. On my own initiative when I was about four or five I went to neighbors' houses, knocked on the door and asked whoever answered if they wanted to hear a song. I had what was called a miniature banjo, or ukulele-banjo. It had no strings, but I proceeded to strum as though I was playing and sang one of many songs that I knew from listening to the radio. Few women worked in those days, so it was usually the housewife and



Hey! Mister Horn Blower



Built in 1898, at the northeast corner of Hamilton Avenue and Compton Road, this building was the second location of the First National Bank of Mt. Healthy. (Mt. Healthy Historical Society photo)



Chartered national banks in the U.S. issued paper money between 1863 and 1935. The paper money issued by these banks had the name of the issuing bank on each note. These notes circulated along side gold and silver certificates, and Federal Reserve notes and were accepted throughout the U.S.



mother who gave me a one-cent piece for my musical rendition.

I knew that money would purchase candy, so, with permission from my mother I would take the earned penny or pennies and walk to Mrs. Adams' candy store, which was just a block away on Compton Road and Joseph Street. She sold a few household items, but it was essentially a candy store. For one-cent I could purchase a stick of licorice or some other type of candy. Often I would get a square piece of bubble gum—about two inches square wrapped in paper that included a baseball card. I heard my relatives and other adults, all Cincinnati Reds fans, refer to National League baseball teams by name. It was always a mystery when I purchased the bubble gum and received a card that represented an American League player, someone who might as well have been a Martian. Over the following years I saved and traded those cards and probably accumulated a few dozen. I don't know what happened to the cards, but I am relatively certain there were a few "winners" in that collection.

As much as I dislike admitting it, I remember participating in minstrel shows in school and civic auditoriums when I was about six years old. The minstrel ensemble consisted of relatives and people from the neighborhood. With blackened faces older participants and I performed the minstrel routine with an interlocutor, or the announcer. This announcer, or straight man or woman interacted with the performers and kept the program moving. I sang songs and participated in comedy routines, but do not remember if I imitated the dialect that one heard in these exercises of insult. In the 1930s minstrel shows in person and in movies were still around but fortunately on the way out. The minstrel show remained popular in the Ohio Valley longer than it should have. There seems to have been a connection with the songs of Stephen Foster, who moved to Cincinnati in 1846 and wrote for this genre.

Speaking of the Ohio Valley, it was 1937 when a most disastrous flood hit Cincinnati with the Ohio River at eighty feet; fifty-two feet was considered flood level. Knowlton's Corner in Northside, an intersection familiar to anyone who went from the northern suburbs to downtown Cincinnati, was under at least ten feet of water. Below Fourth Street in downtown Cincinnati, where the streets descended toward the river's edge, buildings were submerged in water. Offices and places of business were unable to operate and many people

could not get to their places of employment that were functioning in a locale beyond the flooded area.

About two miles east of Knowlton's Corner on Spring Grove Avenue and Platt Avenue stood Chester Park. This amusement park was developed about 1875 by George Stone. The park closed in 1932, nevertheless, some rides operated until 1941. Located on a street car line it was a popular location and probably competed with Coney Island on the Ohio River. I do not remember being taken to Chester Park but do remember passing there and looking at the Ferris Wheel, which was close to the entrance. The Cincinnati Water Works moved into this location.

As a child, I listened to and laughed at the weekly broadcasts of *Amos 'n' Andy* and didn't discover until years later that they were white actors masquerading as African-Americans. This humorous program moved to television—yes, black faced white men on a television screen—but was canceled in 1960 when the NAACP and others protested. "Ishmael Reed praised *Amos 'n' Andy* for presenting a broader view of black America than the average 'hood film.' A lot of black people 'found the show funny,' Reed said. 'But you're not supposed to say that to whites. When I was growing up, for black people that was my favorite show.'"<sup>3</sup>

My father and his brothers were hunters and fishermen. One day at about the age of five I pleaded to accompany my father when he went rabbit hunting with his friends. There were at least six inches of snow on the ground and after twenty minutes, or so, I was so cold that I cried and wanted to go home. Seeing I wouldn't change my mind, my father took me home. He was angry and I realized at that early age that I would not become a hunter.

Looking through some old photographs, I saw some of me when I was four or five years old. There was one of me on a pony, which reminded me of summer times when a fellow would go through the neighborhoods with a pony and a camera. When the kids would see that pony it was not necessary for the man to knock on the door to see if anyone wanted a pony ride. I don't remember what the charge was, probably ten cents. The pony-man also had a camera. For an additional amount he would take a picture of the rider and pony. As I remember, the man dipped the photographic paper into a solution that developed an image on the spot, decades before



Polaroid cameras.

A few other pictures show me in a leather coat and a toy gun. Even though I was not destined to become a hunter I still mimicked my father, who hunted all types of game. At home we ate delicacies but didn't know it. We had pheasant, quail, duck, and other types of wild game. I remember telling people years later that as a child I ate squirrel and rabbit. These doubters would turn up their noses and I would tell them they had no idea what they were missing. Each fall my father, one or two of his brothers and friends would drive to Arkansas for about two weeks to hunt duck and geese. Apparently Arkansas was the place where ducks migrated each year. Duck meat remains a favorite of mine. My father stored his hunting equipment in the basement. This included about twelve wooden duck decoys, most of which, in succeeding decades, were lost or broken. Nevertheless, two survived and I have them.

My father was a good marksman and participated in trapshooting competitions where shooters shot at clay pigeons, flat discs propelled into the air by a mechanical arm. There were facilities for this sport in the Cincinnati area including one in Mt. Healthy, where the shopping center is now located on Hamilton Avenue. I often went with my father and was proud of his excellent scores of twenty or even fifty consecutive hits. His best score was ninety-nine out of one hundred.

The Grand American World Trapshooting Championship (GAWTC) was held in Vandalia, Ohio; this contest was first held there in 1924. Our family usually accompanied my father each summer to watch him compete. He never won the grand prize but did place in the top ten in some events. August 2005 was the last year the GAWTC was held in Vandalia. A larger facility was needed and the annual event was moved to Sparta, Illinois.<sup>4</sup>

The last twenty-gauge shotgun that my father purchased for trapshooting competition was a beautifully engraved Ithaca. Even though I did not share this interest, my father insisted that after his death that this gun was to become mine. With the help of a friend, I make certain the gun is oiled and cared for. But I never fired it and never will. It will be passed on to one of my nephews.

For fishing excursions my father and his brothers used a communal outboard motor, which they would attach to a small rented boat.

More often than not, this motor with minimal power didn't function. Eventually a slightly better motor replaced the useless one.

The Brickyard Lake, at the south end of Forest Avenue, was stocked with fish, and fishermen, including my father, my uncles and some neighbors paid \$1 or \$2 to catch catfish, crappies and an occasional bass from the water's edge. Boats were not allowed on these small lakes. Called "pay lakes" they were oases for hard-working men who didn't have the time or the luxury of traveling to a real lake for a real fishing experience. In the winter we ice skated on the brickyard lake. The Mt. Healthy Brick Company once capable of making 8000 bricks an hour operated from 1887 until 1942, the year I graduated from the eighth grade at Assumption School.

Night crawlers, large worms, were one type of fishing bait. On one occasion my father returned from a fishing trip and dumped the leftover night crawlers onto our lawn. Within a year they multiplied and in the late evening when the grass was damp from dew our lawn was covered with night crawlers. Word spread and it was not uncommon to see men and boys in our yard grabbing the lengthy critters before they could escape back into the ground. My father could have charged for this bait source but he allowed the fishermen to gather bait for nothing.

For a more adventurous fishing experience my father took us to Grand St. Mary's Lake in Celina, Ohio about once each year. The lake stretched ten miles from St. Mary's, Ohio to Celina, Ohio. I've since learned that at the time of my visits it was known as Lake St. Mary's in St. Mary's and Grand Lake in Celina, a difference settled by a later compromise. It was an artificial lake of 13,500 acres, constructed to provide water for the Miami and Erie Canal, created by the state of Ohio during the 19th century (1825-1845). It ran 249 miles from Cincinnati to Toledo on Lake Erie, and provided a water link to the Atlantic Ocean via Lake Erie, the Erie Canal in upstate New York, and the Hudson River.

From a pleasant memory to a sad one, I remember being in the kitchen with my father when he was crying because my mother was extremely ill. Dr. Wallace, our family doctor who made house calls, was upstairs with my mother. There was a newspaper on the table at the time, and I remember on the front page was a photo of soldiers firing a machine gun. Now, I can only think that it could have been



the beginning of the Spanish-Civil War, which started in 1936.

I think it was on this occasion that Doc Wallace stayed with my mother, until he thought it was safe to leave, probably 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. I was asleep when my mother's fever finally broke and Doc Wallace told my father that my mother would be all right. Doc Wallace suggested that my father help him push his car away from the house because the sound of the engine might awaken my mother.

I attended Assumption School, a school for boys and girls that was affiliated with the Roman Catholic Assumption Church that my family attended. The original church was built in 1854. When I attended school there were about 150 students in the school. The two-story building was one block from where we lived. Due to this proximity, my sister Charlotte, my brother Jack and I went home to have lunch with my mother and often with my father who worked next door at the tailor shop. All the teachers were nuns from the order of the Sisters of Divine Providence. They taught grades one through eight.



**Assumption Church and School.** (Mt Healthy Historical Society photos)



Sister Leon Marie, the fifth grade teacher, was handy with the ruler when applied to our open palms. In the fifth grade I began to demonstrate independence by signing my name as Gene instead of Eugene, my given name. Sister Leon Marie berated me for this.

Sister Laura, the sixth grade teacher who was soft-spoken, intelligent and pretty, was a sweetheart, if that's an appropriate description for a nun. I am fortunate to have had those devoted women as teachers. They were strict disciplinarians but caring and helpful. An example of their selflessness and what was a probable requirement at the time is recorded on my graduation diploma. On the line for the pastor to sign is the signature of F.B. Sieve, a tow-the-line-or-else priest. On the line for teacher is "Sister of Divine Providence," written by hand with no indication of personal identity. It was kind and protective Sister Frances, the principle and first grade teacher who signed the diploma anonymously.

At the end of Sunday Mass at Assumption Church during my grammar school years the final prayer before dismissal was "and God save Russia." Christians and especially Catholics were obligated to pray for communist, godless Russia. When in early grades I had no idea what communism was. Nevertheless, we were told it was evil and we should be prepared in the event of a takeover by Russian communists. So, when I was in the third or fourth grade I carried my cap pistol in my school bag as a means of protection. (A cap pistol held rolls of tape that had a tiny bit of fireworks explosive imbedded and made a noise when the tape was advanced and was hit when the trigger was pulled.) With the abundance of Hesslers in Mt. Healthy, the family name was well-represented in most grades at Assumption School.

Stricker's Grove on Compton Road near Bernard Avenue was the location for the annual school picnic; this was within walking distance of my parent's home. At the picnic at the end of my first year in school the little blond girl, whom I was in love with told me she was moving and would not return to school in the fall. She said she and her family were moving to Greenhills, a New Deal model suburb, part of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of April 8, 1935; Greenbelt, Maryland and Greendale, Wisconsin were the other two communities in this program. I had heard of Greenhills and knew that it was a few miles north of Mt. Healthy, however, it might

as well have been on the other side of the earth. My heart was broken for the remainder of the summer. I often wonder what happened to my first love whose name I cannot remember.

Until I was eight or ten, my father and some relatives carried on the tradition of butchering a hog: once before Thanksgiving and another after the New Year. The unfortunate animal came from one of the many farms in New Burlington, an area just north of Mt. Healthy. My sister Charlotte and brother Jack and I enjoyed eating the cracklings, or crisp rendered fat; today they're called pork rinds. Cholesterol was not in our vocabularies in the 1930s and 1940s. I had heard that some neighbors and relatives made beer or what was called home brew during prohibition and for a while afterwards. Since prohibition ended in 1933 when I was five years old I don't know which relatives were specifically involved, probably the same ones who butchered.

My father made goetta, a mixture of three parts ground pork to one part pin oat meal with salt and pepper. The pork came from the butchered hog. In winter, a breakfast of fried goetta and eggs was a Sunday morning custom at our house that followed mass at Assumption Church. When the goetta disappeared, it was replaced with pastry purchased from one of the two bakeries on Hamilton Avenue.

In those days, during the growing season, farmers from Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana came into Cincinnati and lined up their trucks with the backs facing toward the center of what was a large open space where kids and company teams played baseball in the summer. The location of this weekly farmer's market was on the west side of Central Parkway south of Music Hall just before the parkway turned eastward. My mother and father went to this market irregularly making one or two trips toward the end of the summer to purchase large amounts of specific vegetables that my mother would prepare and put in glass containers with a rubber ring that helped to seal the top. These containers were stacked on shelves in the designated fruit cellar in the basement of our home. The convenience of frozen vegetables was decades in the future.

There was a major tailoring industry in Mt. Healthy from about 1850 to 1930. This industry, I have been told, expanded during the Civil War with the need for uniforms. The 1887 *Hamilton County*



*Directory* listed thirty-one tailors, thirty-seven tailoresses and three seamstresses in Mt. Healthy. At the turn of the century one was operated by my paternal grandfather. German names predominate the operators of Mt. Healthy tailor shops: Hessler, Hoechscheid, Dirr, Lauerman, Pfeilstecker, Weber, Blum, Wirth, Steinbrecher, Koehler and Werner.

My paternal grandfather, John Hessler died young at age thirty-seven. I learned that he was duck hunting on the Miami River and fell into the water. His trip home in wet clothing in an open horse-drawn carriage in cool if not cold weather brought on sickness; he died on April 21, 1915. His oldest son, Joseph, my father was fifteen at the time. With his mother my father, who had left school to work in the tailor shop, now ran the business and helped her with the family. Since zoning was unheard of then, these shops next to or part of homes were scattered throughout Mt. Healthy as part of a cottage industry. The smaller shops employed about a dozen people. The Hessler shop, one of the largest, had over one hundred people who sewed and pressed trousers. As a child I often walked next door and wandered through the tailor shop. Everyone knew who I was and all were protective, especially the ladies who operated the sewing machines.

Each tailor shop had a specialty: coats, vests or trousers made



Hessler tailor shop ca. 1900. L to R: Walter Schmalz, John Schmalz, John Hessler, my grandfather, Anna Bonapfel, seated in front, John Mortimor, unknown, Joseph Hessler (brother of John), at the end of the table. Unknowns and my grandmother, Minnie Hessler, holding Joseph Hessler, my father.



under contracts for different clothing companies. The Hessler shop produced trousers for Hyde Park Clothes in Newport, Kentucky, which became Palm Beach clothiers. When I was a child the entire family often had lunch together as well as dinner. (Back then we called lunch, dinner and dinner, supper.) Eventually the tailor shops in Mt. Healthy closed and instead of walking next door to his job, my father drove to Newport, where Hyde Park Clothes was located. A few of the Hessler employees continued at the Newport location, however, most lost their jobs. The independent Hoechscheid tailor shop was the last shop of its kind in Mount Healthy.

My father had always made trousers for my brother Jack and me. If there was a small amount of fabric left over from a large order, my father would make a pair of trousers for us. We were always the best-dressed kids in school because we had tailor made trousers. However, when I started school, knickers were still in fashion. I wore tailor-made knickers for a year or two. They were much different than the ones the other kids wore. Mine buttoned just below the knee; store purchased knickers had elastic, and after a while this stretched and the knickers drooped. By the time I entered the second grade I was wearing long trousers. Girls at Assumption School wore uniforms and the boys wore white shirts with ties. Notwithstanding my tailor-made knickers and trousers, all classmates and other students came from working class homes or nearby farms; there was no hint of fashion among us.

The Hessler tailor shop had a baseball team that consisted of players who worked in the shop. I attended many of the games that took place at the many public parks around Cincinnati. I remember more than once a game took place on the spot where the aforementioned farmer's market on Central Parkway was located.

Two of my father's brothers, Gus and Tone worked at the tailor shop; the youngest, Carl, with whom I identified, had other ambitions. My Uncle Carl had a popular and desirable Indian motorcycle and traveled to and from California when he was about eighteen. This was before states were linked with major highways. Later he owned a midget dirt track race car, and with this car and a hired driver he traveled the circuit and followed the racing season throughout the Midwest. A few times each year upon waking in the morning I would see the trailer and his race car parked near our house. I often

wondered about the places he had visited; wonderment that I would satisfy later in my life. My Uncle Carl Hessler rode as a mechanic in one of the Indianapolis races in the 1930s, in the days when race cars required a second person, a mechanic in the cockpit. In some books that chronicle the development of dirt track and Indy car racing in the United States you will find Carl Hessler's name in the index.



**“Things to come” and trying to look manly with a pipe.**

When the tailor shop closed the one-floor building was converted into five apartments. The large furnace that was required to furnish heat and steam for the pressing machines now provided heat for the apartments. My father decided that this same heating system could heat our house just twenty feet away. A trench was dug and connecting pipes were installed. When there was snow on the ground the connecting pipes warmed the ground and there was a path in the snow. The boiler that created the intense heat and steam for the pressing machines required a tall chimney. This 30- or 40-foot chimney still stands next to the former tailor shop on Elizabeth Street. It was too expensive to dismantle, so it remains in place. It was behind this chimney that my cousin Jim and I tried to smoke dried corn silk from fresh corn that we rolled into cigarette paper. We were about eight or nine years old.

When I was about twelve my father, who left early for the trip



to Newport, gave me the responsibility of maintaining the furnace in the apartment building next door. This meant getting up earlier than I normally would for school to tend to the furnace and rake out the remnants from the burned coal. After school I paid a visit to the furnace and again before bed, if my father didn't. The worst part of this obligation was to shovel the delivered coal into the cellar. A few years later a new heating system was installed: an answer to my prayers.

During the post Depression year's signs with NRA below a blue eagle were placed in windows of the tailor shop. The NRA was a Great Depression era bureau that functioned from 1933-1936. This eagle image was evident in businesses all around Mt. Healthy; everyone seemed to take pride in displaying it. Years later I discovered that this was the symbol for the National Recovery Administration; a bureau that was designed to encourage industrial recovery and combat unemployment. CCC, which stood for Civilian Conservation Corps, is another set of initials familiar to me. Established in 1933 and abolished in 1942, this program, which enrolled 3 million young men, mostly rural, called "Soil Soldiers," was often mentioned in our household. More than once my father took us for a drive in the country to show us young men who were clearing land and doing other conversation work. My father explained to us that President Roosevelt was doing everything he could to put America back to work. A cousin and a few neighbor boys joined the CCC. (Today symbols and abbreviations that represent companies, products and institutions are impossible to avoid. These are most evident on clothing, caps and running shoes. Until the late 20th century labels were hidden, now they are status symbols.)

The NRA and the CCC were short-lived, as was the WPA, the Work Projects Administration (1935-1943), however some results of the latter remain visible today. I vaguely remember hearing about theatrical and musical projects that were sponsored by the WPA. I might have attended some with my parents. Many years later when I traveled the country as a musician and particularly when I moved to New York City, I saw murals that were created by WPA artists, especially those in the RCA Building. Portions of the originals, by Seymour Fogel and Diego Rivera, were altered due to socialistic subject matter.



The Cincinnati Union Terminal opened in 1933, and I accompanied my family when they went to see this Art Deco building soon after the opening. I remember seeing this wonderful building and marveling at the twenty-foot high mosaic murals by Winold Reiss (who emigrated from Germany in 1913). Twenty-five years later, when I worked at the Radio City Music Hall in New York City, the Art Deco interior reminded me of the Cincinnati Union Terminal. As an adult, the annual flights to and from New York City allowed me to see some of these murals that were moved to the Greater Cincinnati Airport in the 1970s.

When I was in grammar school, the paddle wheeler *Island Queen* made leisurely trips between the Landing in Downtown Cincinnati to Coney Island. The trip by automobile was much quicker but not as much fun. It was so enjoyable in the summer for mothers and their children to pack a picnic basket and take that trip to Coney Island returning on the *Island Queen* in the early evening.

Based on my early interest in music, my parents decided to provide music lessons for me. When I was about seven years old they took me to Wurlitzer's, a music store on the south side of Fourth Street between Walnut and Main Streets in Cincinnati and I began to study banjo with Hank Karch, who also taught guitar and mandolin. After a few years I switched to a tenor guitar that was tuned the same as the banjo. Hank wrote out the chords for songs that I wanted to sing so I could accompany myself. Rudolph W. Wurlitzer, a Saxon immigrant, was the founder of this company that sold musical instruments and offered musical instruction. The Wurlitzer name is now perpetuated by organs and collectible jukeboxes.

### **A Choirboy at Assumption Church**

Soon after I began studying music privately, boys in the lower grades at Assumption School were asked if they would like to sing in the choir. Three or four classmates and I were selected. I had an advantage since I could read music. This was my introduction to liturgical music and I loved it. I didn't understand the Latin words of the mass, but nevertheless, I enjoyed pronouncing and singing what was for me a mysterious new language. When my voice changed I joined the men who sang on Sunday to augment the boy's choir. A particular incident from my early choir years remains in my mind as one of the saddest things I can remember; it happened when I was about twelve.

Since there was a conflict for another boy and me on the evening of the weekly choir rehearsal, the organist, Bertha Blum, met with the two of us after school at her home, when necessary, to coach us on new music. She often gave us candy or ice cream after we finished our private rehearsal. Miss Blum, who was probably in her early 40s and had never married, was kind to everyone: I liked her.

Miss Blum, who at one time played piano for silent films at the Main Theater, kept a record of the boys who showed up to sing the 7:00 a.m. mass. In those days there were at least three high masses during the week in addition to the Sunday mass, the occasional funeral and Saturday wedding. I lived just two blocks from the church, and on cold rainy mornings often sang the mass alone with Miss Blum at the organ.

As the people left the church and we sang the last chorus of *Adeste Fidelis*, at midnight mass on Christmas Eve, we exchanged glances of anticipation: an annual ritual was about to take place. As we sang the last *venite, adoremus Dominum*, we were ready to sprint the 200 feet to the school and wait: Miss Blum would have gifts to be selected by those with the best daily attendance at mass. I usually had the first choice of a game, a model airplane kit, or some other reward. As I said, Miss Blum was a nice lady; all the boys liked her, especially on Christmas Eve.

When I was in the fifth grade a new boy moved to our little community and joined my class. His mother had died a few years earlier, so he lived alone with his father, who was a few years older than Miss Blum. A few months after the new boy arrived, we'll call him David, I noticed that Miss Blum seemed happier. Then, I saw her and David's father together. I saw them at the one and only local movie theater or walking together after Sunday mass. It made me feel good: perhaps Miss Blum would no longer be an old maid (an accepted term in the 1930s and 1940s for any single woman over thirty or thirty-five).

Months went by and we began to whisper and wonder about a possible marriage. However, before these two people ended their loneliness and my friend would again have a mother, David's father died. I felt sad: now Miss Blum would remain an old maid, and she wouldn't become David's mother.

Mt. Healthy had only a few thousand people, most of German extraction, where work and responsibility came before everything else. Perhaps the pastor at the church, the only Catholic Church in this little southern Ohio community, was unaware of the romance that was budding between two middle-aged people. The romance was not flaunted, neither was it kept a secret. Perhaps only immediate relatives, friends and a few choirboys noticed what was happening.

When I joined the other boys in the choir loft to sing the funeral

mass for David's father, I was astonished to see Miss Blum sitting at the organ, sobbing. Even at age twelve I thought someone could and should have been engaged to play the organ for that funeral mass, a time of unimaginable grief for Miss Blum.

She wept through the entire service, often playing with one hand so she could wipe away the continuous stream of tears. From the choir loft I felt like screaming to the priest and people below, "please, please—help Miss Blum!" But dutifully I continued to sing: *Requiem aeternam....*

Deaths of close friends and immediate family members are always sad occasions. However, that day when Miss Blum was compelled to play the organ at the funeral mass for the man she would have married remains as one of my saddest memories.

Twenty years later during a visit to my hometown, I heard that Miss Blum had died: she had never married. We often speak of marriages that are made in heaven. I feel certain a marriage between Miss Blum and David's father was consecrated in heaven. I always think of Miss Blum on Christmas Eve.

During the post-depression years, as a carryover from the days of vaudeville, neighborhood movie theaters held a variety of events between movie showings, as a way of increasing the attendance during the week. There was dish or cutlery night, when a piece of one or the other was awarded by ticket number or by some other method. Over a period of time some people put together complete sets of dishes, knives, forks and spoons. The dishes are what they now call Depression glass: pale milky colored dishes that for a while in the 1960s and 1970s were popular collectibles.

A radio show called *Dr. IQ* that fell into this category was broadcast nationally from a major theater in a different city each week. Gentlemen with hand-held microphones would select people in the audience and say to the host, "I have a lady [gentleman] in the audience Dr." Dr. IQ would ask a question and depending on the difficulty of the answer five, ten or twenty silver dollars were awarded.

Other gimmicks to attract more people to local theaters included amateur contests. I played guitar and sang in dozens of these in the greater Cincinnati area. When I was about eight or ten my parents took me to these amateur competitions. The theaters that held amateur contests would often stagger them so there were not too many that



were held on the same night. Often I would see and compete against some of the same contestants at the different theaters. One of the theaters that held amateur contests was the Empire in the upper Over the Rhine district.

Being one of the youngest amateurs I usually received one of three prizes, often first place. The prizes were, as I remember, \$5, \$3 and \$2, or a piece of merchandise in place of money. I preferred money prizes though I did receive a wrist watch in a contest at a theater in Hamilton, Ohio.

### **Over-the Rhine**

Over-the-Rhine sat immediately north of Cincinnati's downtown. The Miami and Erie Canal formed its western and southern boundaries, and this waterway came to be called "the Rhine" (River), probably an ethnic slur aimed at the thousands of German immigrants who lived in it during the mid-19th century. By 1900 it was known, according to one historian, as Cincinnati's "premiere entertainment district, for it offered a gaudy array of saloons, restaurants, shooting galleries, arcades, gambling dens, dance halls, burlesque houses, and theaters." It attracted throngs of out-of-town visitors, traveling salesmen, politicians, show people and 'sports' who gave the neighborhood an evil reputation among some respectable people." Thirty years later Fannie Hurst wrote a best-selling novel (*Back Street*, 1930) set in part in Over-the-Rhine, a story so successful that it inspired three movie versions (1932, 1941, and 1961) in my lifetime. "Over-the-Rhine," lamented one, "combines 'all the tarnished tinsel of Bohemianism with the trimmings of a gutter and the morals of a sewer.'"<sup>5</sup>

In this post-Depression period it was very common to see out-of-work men wandering through neighborhoods. These unfortunate men roamed the country looking for work. They would always knock on the back door of the house. After removing their hat they politely offered to do any kind of work for a sandwich. My mother didn't have any work for them but she would always give them something to eat and they were always extremely grateful. There was at least one family in our immediate neighborhood that needed help because the husband could not find work. Frequently my mother would prepare a pot of soup for the family and other neighbors would also contribute something.

Holtzhauser's on Hamilton Avenue between Compton Road and

Kinney Avenue was what was then called a dry goods store, where general clothing, household merchandise and shoes were sold. To advertise the sturdiness and support of a specific brand of shoes, Robert Wadlo, a young man from Alton, Illinois who was one inch short of being nine feet tall was brought to the alley space between Holtzhauser's and the bank. He wore the advertised shoes and as he stood leaning on his cane on a flat back truck, everyone gawked at him. It was like a sideshow at a circus. As I remember he looked pitiful and self conscious, but did this to make a living. Robert Wadlo died young.



**Gene Hessler at top center behind Hank Karch.** (Photo by Chas. H. Longley)

At age ten I would go to the city on a bus for my weekly lesson and Tuesday evening rehearsal. It would stop at the corner of Hamilton Avenue and Compton Road and as I remember, the bus station in Cincinnati was at Seventh and Walnut. When I arrived there I would always go to the same lunchroom and would have my dinner (either a hamburger or a roast beef sandwich) before I walked to Wurlitzer's on Fourth Street for my lesson. In the bus station there was a shoeshine stand where a black fellow shined shoes for about fifteen-cents. About once each month I would have my shoes shined because I enjoyed the fellow's routine. When he applied the cloth to shine my shoes he created interesting rhythmic patterns, similar



to a jazz drummer playing a solo. In the evening I rehearsed with a string ensemble that was conducted by my teacher, Hank Karch; the Wurlitzer Plectrophonic Orchestra consisted of banjos, guitars, mandolins, and two string bass players. My parents would drive from Mt. Healthy and usually arrive during the rehearsal and then would take me home. Hank Karch's string ensemble performed three or four concerts each year in different locations in Cincinnati. On November 7, 1937 this Wurlitzer ensemble was selected to perform on the *RCA Magic Key Hour*, which was broadcast on the NBC network.

When I was nine or ten years of age my family visited Lake Worth, Florida, where my Aunt Julia, one of my mother's sisters was living at the time. This was the first time I saw and swam in an ocean. What I remember as something similar to a religious revival took place at an outdoor bandstand just a few blocks from where my aunt lived. I took my banjo with me on this trip so I could practice and one of my aunt's neighbors had heard me singing and playing. As we strolled near the revival, the neighbor saw us and made the suggestion to the preacher that I could perform for the attendees and within fifteen minutes I was seated before them. I sang and played *God Bless America*, the only song in my repertoire that I thought appropriate. The audience wanted an encore and the minister said sing anything you want. I gave them an upbeat version of *I Ain't Got Nobody*. Inappropriate or not, the audience smiled and applauded. A preacher with an imagination could have taken the words "I ain't got nobody, and nobody cares for me," and turned it into a sermon about a lost soul, but he didn't.

The American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists held annual conventions; in 1939 it took place in Providence, Rhode Island. Groups came from around the country, including Hank Karch's ensemble. These groups performed, were graded and then received first, second or third place awards. On that trip I remember going to the New York's World's Fair. There are a couple pictures I have of me at the fair. I was only eleven years old, so my mother went along on the trip. In New York we stayed at the Liberty Hotel, a four or five story building on 55th or 56th Street with a *Statue of Liberty* on the top of the building. I thought the eight or ten-foot statue was the real *Statue of Liberty*. When I moved to New York City



in 1955 I looked for that hotel; it was no longer there.

About the time I was in the sixth or seventh grade I switched to the conventional six-string guitar and continued studying with Hank Karch. But for some reason I never really connected with the guitar. Some instruction in music theory might have helped. Then, when I was in the seventh or eighth grade, my mother's brother, Uncle George died. He had played trombone in his younger days and the instrument was given to our family.

It was the summer of 1941 when Mr. McClain from Hamilton, Ohio came to Mt. Healthy; he was the literal *Music Man*. He walked through Mt. Healthy knocking on doors wanting to know if there were any children who would like to learn to play an instrument. He approached the Mt. Healthy public school and also Assumption School that I attended. The schools agreed that they would start a music program and he would teach all the instruments. When Mr. McClain came to the door to tell my mother about this program, she mentioned that her brother, my Uncle George had played trombone and it was given to us when he died. To my mother's astonishment I said that I wanted to play it; she was surprised and confused. There was an assumption that my brother Jack would learn to play the trombone. My brother was there and he didn't seem to care that I claimed it because he said that he would like to play the drums.

My decision to study trombone was instantaneous; I don't think I had dwelled on this possibility. From the time my brother was born there was subconscious jealousy. Although this insecurity was resolved years later, the decision to play trombone was, as I now see it, a possible way of keeping my brother from playing it. Looking at these decisions objectively, my brother, Jack, was meant to be a drummer, not a trombonist.

So Jack and I both started together with Mr. McClain at the Assumption School. There were no more than eight or ten music students: drums, one trombone, three trumpets, a clarinet, or two, and one or two saxophones. We started from scratch playing simple scales. I might have been the only one who could read music and because of that and my previous musical training I progressed rapidly. When I entered Mt. Healthy High School, I had been playing trombone for a little more than a year. I needed some formal training and I began studying with William Wilkins. He was the bass

trombonist in the Cincinnati Symphony and taught both tenor and bass trombone. Mr. Wilkins lived in Hartwell and my father took me there on Tuesday nights for my lessons. Mr. Wilkins was a good teacher with a warm personality. I could not have had a better first teacher.

A convenient place to listen to music was at Stricker's Grove, one of the locations where companies and organizations held their annual picnics; it was a ten-minute walk from where I lived in Mt. Healthy. During the summer months there was a picnic there just about every weekend, and most often there was a band of five to eight musicians that played for dancing on Saturday and Sunday. The admission to the picnic was usually 25-cents. If the affair was private I found a way to walk through the woods that led to the picnic grounds and hoped that no one noticed my entrance. With the help of my sister Charlotte, and by watching dancers at these picnics, I learned to jitterbug, a dance that was called the Lindy Hop in New York City. Listening to these bands and later dancing to them was a learning experience. Gutzweiler's Grove was another place for picnics and dancing.

I didn't know my maternal grandmother, but my mother's father, George Schmidt (1862-1939), whom we called Gross Pop (grandfather in German), lived three blocks away on Elizabeth Street. He spoke in a thick German accent and I'm uncertain if I always understood what he said. Nevertheless, he made me laugh and I always enjoyed his company. Gross Pop was a baker in Berlin, Germany. He came to the U.S. aboard the *Herder* in 1880 and settled in northern Kentucky where in 1883 he married his wife Anna (1861-1917), my maternal grandmother. Their first five children were born in Kentucky. My mother and her twin sister Anna were born the year the



**Charlotte at age 18.**



family moved to Mt. Healthy in 1898.

When in the fifth grade I was out on the play ground and one of the nuns said that I should go to my grandfather's house. He lived two blocks from the school and all the family members were already there when I arrived, however, he was already dead. I had always liked Gross Pop; he was fun to be with. My father's father had died young; I never knew him. My paternal grandmother lived around the corner and I spent a lot of time with her. She was a thoughtful and kind lady.

There were other immigrants like my maternal grandfather who spoke little English. My paternal grandfather was born here, consequently my father didn't absorb the German language as my mother did from her father and extended family.

The German influence in Cincinnati continued visually with the comic strip the *Katzenjamer Kids*. Everyone I knew called comic strips the funny papers. My brother, Jack and I copied the covers of comic books by drawing them free hand. There was no reason I couldn't have pursued both art and music, but I know that I made a better musician than I would have an artist. Jack's real talent as an artist surfaced much later. Jack's artistry blossomed when he was in his thirties and people in Cincinnati and elsewhere who purchased examples of his art are fortunate to have them as well as his photographs. Jack, who was a photographer for General Electric in Cincinnati, was also a good jazz drummer.

When I was in the fifth or sixth grade, my parents enrolled me in a correspondence art course. In those days there were ads inside match covers and in magazines. There would be a female profile with the phrase "can you draw this?" After submitting my drawing a salesman came around a few weeks later and convinced my parents that I had talent. I think it cost my father \$10 a month for a year. About half way through the program, I lost interest because I was too young to comprehend what I should be doing. My father was obligated to pay for the remaining lessons and I felt guilty for a long time.

In 1938 and 1939, there were walk-a-thons, walk-a-shows, marathon dances, they went by different names. Decades later a movie, *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* documented this subject. Couples would enter these brutal endurance contests and they would dance to live



music or to recordings. All they really had to do was move as a couple on the floor. Every four hours, or so, they would get a ten-minute break. I think they had to eat on their feet as well; this went on until only one couple remained upright. One person often held the other from collapsing.

Looking back, this was a precursor to current 21st century mindless reality shows on television. It was a stunt and people would go to these things and watch them. I remember going with my family. People would pay admission and would remain for as long as they wanted. Of course, I don't know who would be there at 3:00 or 4:00 a.m. or even 9:00 a.m., but these insane contests went around the clock. Finally when only one couple remained on their feet, they would receive some kind of prize, which probably was not worth the agony the couple experienced. But, as they say, times were bad and people did crazy things for money. Now I think watching an event like this would be as bad as looking at an automobile accident.

On Sunday afternoons in the 1930s we often went to the airport at the south-west corner of Colerain Avenue and Springdale Road to watch small planes with two open cockpits take off and land on the irregular grass surface. The barnstorming period of death-defying antics came to an end about 1928; nevertheless, a fifteen or twenty-minute ride in a small plane was still a novelty and a thrill for those who could afford the charge, which was probably \$5.

A more constructive way of spending time in my pre-teen years was to make model airplanes and ships and spent hours alone in the basement making them. I didn't completely shun my friends in the neighborhood; I played baseball and I was outside like most kids but in a sense I think I was a loner then, just as I am now. In addition to my time in the basement making model airplanes, I always devoted a minimum of an hour or more to musical practice after school. My parents never had to force me to practice; in fact more often than not, they told me it was time to stop.

During the World War II years the yo-yo was made popular by Philippino men who promoted this circular piece of wood that rotated on a string. These gentlemen would appear after school hours near a business location where one could purchase a yo-yo. In Mt. Healthy the spot was in front of my Uncle Gus' 5¢ & 10¢ store (now Manarino's Music store) on Hamilton Avenue. Competitions

consisted of performing tricks with names like rock the baby, walk the dog, around the world, etc. Each contestant had three attempts to perform the trick. After elimination, the person who performed the trick with the least number of attempts would win. I don't remember, but the prize was probably a yo-yo. The Philippine demonstrators also had the ability to carve the name of the winner into the yo-yo. I won a contest in 1941 and still have the blue yo-yo with my name carved into it.

On my way to and from school during the war years Victory Gardens were part of the landscape. Just about everyone found a corner on their property to plant vegetables; some people transformed their entire lawn area into a Victory Garden. We had a garden and joined everyone in the neighborhood in saving excess cooking fat, tin cans, anything that could be converted into something that we thought would help the war effort.

Summers in greater Cincinnati were often brutally hot. When the heat was unbearable it was common for members of my family to retreat from our oven-like bedrooms and sleep on the living room floor. Another and better alternative was to move outside to the front porch. Air conditioned homes were luxuries that we didn't even contemplate.

Every June or July, for many years, the entire family would travel by auto to a religious retreat house in Melbourne, Kentucky, about fifteen or twenty miles from Cincinnati. We visited one of my mother's sisters, Margaret, a nun, who took the name of Sister Dolores Marie. Members of the Sisters of Divine Providence, regardless where they were stationed would return to the mother house for a retreat every summer. We were allowed to spend about an hour with my aunt, which seemed cruel to me. However, all religious orders were strict and members accepted the rules unquestionably. Sister Dolores became secretary to Fulton Sheen while he was in Baltimore, before he became a bishop. Many years later while living in New York City I met Bishop Sheen and told him of my relationship with his former secretary.

Radio continued as the primary form of entertainment in most homes in the 1930s and 1940s. Baseball radio announcer Red Barber was a voice I remember as my father listened to the Cincinnati Reds games. After dinner my family listened to Lowell Thomas on

WLW, the NBC affiliate. He delivered the world news, which, when I was in my pre-teen years was usually beyond my comprehension. Nevertheless, I liked the sound of his voice; I felt as though he was speaking to me. At that time Lowell Thomas was as respected as Walter Cronkite was fifty years later.

Years later when I was living in New Jersey I spent a summer reading all the books written by Lowell Thomas. He lived about 100 miles, or less, north of where I lived. I wrote a letter telling him how much I admired and respected him and the pleasure he gave me as a child. A few months before he died Lowell Thomas sent me an autographed photo, which I have hanging in my home.

With 500,000 watts WLW was, at one time, the most powerful station in the country, if not the world. The "nation's station" owned by Powell Crosley was required to reduce its power to 50,000 watts in 1939. In my pre-teen years I also remember listening to live music that emanated from Cincinnati radio stations, especially WLW. Doris Kappelhoff (Doris Day) sang at this radio station. As did the Clooney sisters, Rosemary and Betty. Jimmie James had a regular evening program on WLW, as I remember. I listened to Homer and Jethro, who were good musicians and not just the hillbillies they pretended to be. It must have been the mandolin playing of Homer or Jethro that planted the seed of interest for bluegrass music that I have come to appreciate.

Bluegrass music, when performed by authentic players is another form of jazz, in my opinion. The mandolin could be considered the trumpet and the banjo the tenor saxophone of the group. The improvisation, especially by mandolin players at breakneck tempi reminds me of jazz trumpet players as they would attack *Cherokee*, always playing it at a fast tempo. On National Public Radio I heard Ricky Skaggs, mandolin player extraordinaire, praising Andy Statman, progressive bluegrass mandolin virtuoso. The improvisations of Statman, Skaggs said, were a blend of Bill Monroe and John Coltrane.

If you listen to the improvisations of Django Reinhardt, the gypsy guitarist who, with his quintet or trio was called the Hot Club of France, there is a similarity to the way some bluegrass guitar players sound. Stephane Grapelli, who, in his later years gained more notoriety in the jazz world, was the violinist with the Hot Club



of France.<sup>6</sup> The rapid tempi of Klezmer music, another style that I appreciate, reminds me of bluegrass music. In 2004 Paul Taylor created a ballet for his dance company called Klezmer Bluegrass. I guess he heard the same similarity as I.

This is an appropriate place to mention the blues. The twelve-bar blues is the first musical form that most jazz musicians learn to improvise on and it becomes part of us. The flatted third against the major third in the fundamental chords make the blues what it is. Improvised blues can be played slowly and at rapid-fire tempi and every tempo in between. Louis Armstrong, Charlie “Bird” Parker and all the musicians during the decades between played the blues, each their own way. Musicians were influenced by these and other giants and borrowed from them. However, each played his or her individual way when playing the blues or improvising on some other composition, *e.g.*, *Body and Soul*, *Cherokee*, *Polka Dots and Moonbeams*, *Take the A Train*, etc., etc.

The blues, for many listeners who are not musicians mean something else completely. To them the blues is not a form but a style of playing and singing, most often performed at an extremely slow to a moderately slow tempo. Too often guitar and harmonica blues players who mimic Robert Johnson, Leadbelly, Muddy Waters and others seem to do nothing but imitate these musicians and never make their own statement. There are blues players who “do their own thing,” and I am always delighted to hear them, however, they are in the minority; others are content to repeat the sound of the blues from the 1920s and 30s. As a comparison, I will never tire of listening to the recordings of Charlie Parker, but I would quickly tire of listening to a lot of imitators of Bird.

In the 1940s there were nightly broadcasts from hotels and ballrooms around the country where bands played. These broadcasts would begin about 10:00 p.m. in Cincinnati and last until about 1:00 a.m. Every fifteen or thirty minutes a different band would come on the air. It was a thrill to lie in bed and listen to Jan Savit, Woody Herman, Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, etc. The announcer would say “coming to you from the Aragon Ballroom in Chicago, the Steel Pier in Atlantic City,” or “the Hotel (you name it), it’s the music of....” As a teenager I wondered what these magical places looked like. The time came when I played many of these locations when I traveled

with Elliot Lawrence, Billy May, Woody Herman and other bands.

The Albee Theater on the south side of Fountain Square and a venue for live entertainment between movies was designed by Charles Lamb. From the foyer patrons climbed a magnificent staircase that led to the theater. This elegant movie palace, as others were in all major cities, that could accommodate 3300 people closed in 1974 and was demolished in 1977. (The location is now occupied by the Westin Hotel.) About 1941 a traveling review called Olsen and Johnson's *Hellzapoppin'* played at the Albee Theater. This was a reduced version of the Broadway show that was filled with lunacy and funny sight gags. The band, with excellent musicians, was a precursor to the Spike Jones band that recorded satirical arrangements of *Cocktails for Two*, the *Glow Worm*, *Dance of the Hours* *Liebestraum* and other tunes and melodies, popular and classical, all with exaggerated sound effects that were as funny as the cartoon images they created in your head as you listened to these recordings. *Der Fuehrer's Face* was extremely popular during World War II because it ridiculed Adolph Hitler. Each time the band yelled "Heil" it was followed by a raspberry or Bronx cheer.

Peter Schickele was probably influenced by Spike Jones when he invented P.D.Q. Bach, the mythical son of J.S. Bach. Peter Schickele's original compositions or adaptations of classical compositions laced with pop melodies are humorous and often sophisticated, all by the little-known P.D.Q. Bach. Schickele often used instruments made from implements such as a garden hose, funnel and a bicycle tire pump. In the 1950s I attended a concert of P.D.Q.'s music at Carnegie Hall.

## **Chapter II**

### **High School Bopster and Jitterbug 1942-1946**

I COULD HAVE attended one of the Catholic high schools in Cincinnati, however I chose, as many of my Assumption School classmates did to go to Mt. Healthy High School, a public institution that was a five-block walk from where I lived. I had been a good student at Assumption School. However, soon after I entered high school music dominated my life and my grades plummeted; I failed algebra and biology. Although I was the only boy in the class, I learned to use a typewriter in a general business class, a skill I am grateful to have and one that I continue to use. I squeaked through two years of Latin; the knowledge of this so-called dead language helped me later in life with word derivations within romance languages. Miss Ethel L. Frost was the Latin teacher; she was a strict no-nonsense teacher, but kind and sympathetic to my lack of scholarship.

When I entered Mt. Healthy High School, I had been playing trombone for about 15 months. There had been no band at Mt. Healthy High school; the total enrollment was only about 350 students. As her first teaching assignment Miss Elizabeth McClure came to the Mt. Healthy School system in my freshman year to conduct the glee club and form a band. There were about eight or ten musicians that made up the band. We played for some school functions including graduations. The glee club was much larger and I was a member for all four years in school.

Even though music dominated my life, I was a member of the track team for three years. I could surpass the fastest runner in our school at fifty yards. Unfortunately for me, the hundred yard dash was the minimum distance dash in high school competition. I made a feeble attempt to play football, but, after weeks of practice I told the coach I wouldn't be available for the first game because I had a gig, as I often did on Friday nights. That was the end of my attempt at playing football.

I planned to leave school at 16 and go on the road with a traveling band. During my junior year I realized that although music was to be my profession, I needed an education and with personal application my grades improved. With poor grades for two years, my average



placed me toward the bottom of my graduating class. (When I received my master's degree in 1957, I graduated *cum laude*.) I didn't develop intellectually until after I left home and began to travel. The history classes in high school were a bore and those in college I tolerated. My love of history didn't blossom until my thirties when I became interested in numismatics and collectible paper money in particular. The association of a specific coin or piece of paper money to a period or person made history come alive for me. To hold a piece of currency is to hold history in your hands.

During the war years in the 1940's zoot suits were the hip thing to wear. Students at Mt. Healthy High School were typically conservative; they wore conventional clothes to school, as did I. We differed when it was time to dress up; for me it was time to get hip and put on the zoot suit. This included shirts that had long collars and a tie with a large Windsor knot. The bottom of the tie would end just below the points of the collar. Part of the outfit was a key chain that hung near your ankles. To make one of those I bought two or three chains that resembled a key chain at the hardware store and linked them



**Notice the wide lapels on my zoot suit.**

together. Then to top it off a hat was required with a wide brim of about 3½ to 4 inches. Some of this I purchased in Cincinnati at Max's Pawn and Clothing Shop at thirteenth and Central Avenue. It was in what was called the black section of town, but all the hipsters went there to buy some of their zoot suit paraphernalia. The epitome of those who wore zoot suits was Cab Calloway. (In 2005 I read that Chris Calloway Brooks, grandson of Cab Calloway, donned a zoot suit and fronted a band of New York musicians in an attempt to resurrect his grandfather's image.)

During my zoot suit period I was dating girls in North College Hill, the adjacent community. As I walked down Hamilton Avenue people would stare from house and car windows. I wouldn't have been out of

place in some Cincinnati locations, but my manner of dressing was an enigma in conservative Mt. Healthy and North College Hill. I couldn't have cared less. Like Cab Calloway, who dressed that way: I was hip! The zoot suit era ended for me about the time I graduated from high school in 1946 when I began to dress more conservatively.

My sister Charlotte began dating her future husband, Louis Giordullo, about 1940. One of Lou's brothers had jukeboxes in some bars and clubs in the African-American neighborhoods of Cincinnati, and it was jazz that the patrons wanted. When new records were placed in the machines, Lou would bring the discarded ones to our house. It was from these early records of Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Earl Hines and others that expanded my interest to include jazz. I kept these recordings until I moved from New York to St. Louis in 1986. It was painful to divest myself of these treasures, but it was necessary. I donated them to the jazz program at the Manhattan School of Music, my *alma mater*.

There was a community band in Mt. Healthy, and toward the end of my freshmen year in high school I began playing with this band that consisted of members much older than I. A few years earlier a park with a swimming pool was developed. A bandstand was built within this park on McMakin Avenue and the community band played concerts there during the summer. At the east entrance to the park, the dead end street was one of the locations for street dances. A dance band would play and couples would dance on the street surface. Neighboring North College Hill, College Hill, Northside and in most communities in the Cincinnati area also held street dances in the summer.

During my first year in high school some classmates formed a band. All of us played at about the same level, consequently we played only the simplest arrangements. One of the saxophonists couldn't attend a particular rehearsal and someone in the band had heard about a fifteen year-old African-American kid who played alto saxophone. As I remember one of his parents brought "the kid" to College Hill where we were rehearsing. As he warmed up we exchanged glances wondering who is this guy and where did he come from, because he was playing things beyond what any of us were capable of playing. The young musician was Frank Foster, who gained fame as tenor saxophone soloist and arranger with Count



Basie. Unfortunately, our paths never crossed again.

My friends and I rehearsed with this band for a year before someone took a chance and hired us for a one-night gig at Gutzweiler's Grove. The night before that first job, I received a call to play with the Rhythm Kings, a band I had followed around Cincinnati. It was a non-union band with excellent young musicians. One of the two trombone players received his draft notification and I received the call that I had prayed for. So I deserted my friends and joined the Rhythm Kings, which at the time was nirvana for me. My school friends gave me the cold shoulder for a while, but I was now in a band of experienced musicians, and most of the guys dressed in zoot suits.

I previously had befriended a few of the Rhythm Kings musicians and they came through for me with this opening. The Rhythm Kings had every Count Basie stock arrangement that was printed. Other arrangements were similar to or based on hit records of other bands. These arrangements were purchased for 75-cents each at the Song Shop on 5th Street just west of Walnut Street at Fountain Square in downtown Cincinnati.

I played second trombone with the Rhythm Kings until Linus Tuppman was drafted. I moved to the first or lead chair and Dick Herminghausen joined the band as my partner. Dick's brother Warren was already a member of the trumpet section. I remember seeing the Herminghausen brothers for the first time before I knew who they were.

During my freshman year at Mt. Healthy High School I was a cheerleader along with Ruth Bauer and Phyllis Jean Milner. We, the cheerleaders, accompanied our high school basketball team for a game at Deer Park High School. Deer Park High had a pep rally-type band that consisted of about eight or ten musicians who played at the game; the band was not very good. At half time two lanky guys walked in wearing pegged trousers and shirts with long collars, one with a trumpet the other with a trombone. When they joined the band it was as though the other musicians now had a purpose; the band now had spirit. A year later these two guys in zoot suits, the Herminghausen brothers and I were friends.

The Rhythm Kings consisted of five saxophones, three trumpets, two trombones and a rhythm section of piano, bass and drums.



The band had its share of musicians with German names including Herminghausen, Wickelhouse, Balzheiser, Driftmeyer, Ulenbrock, and Hessler. Other non-German band members that I remember were Rudy Minniti, Jim Ahern, Martha Davis, Joe Kennedy, Jack Levi, Al Winger, Ruth Winger, Milt Ostrow, Bill Oakley, Gene Watson and Clarence Loos. Though some band members could have become professional musicians, tenor saxophonist Billy Slapin and I were the only two who followed that path. Billy Slapin played with a few name bands and settled in New York City as I did. We worked together on a few occasions and in the 1980s lived just a few miles apart in northern New Jersey.

I don't know the genesis of the Rhythm Kings, but assume the band was organized around 1940 by musicians who were subsequently drafted at different times into the armed forces. We rehearsed in what was probably a community center not too far from Findlay Market between Elm and Race Streets. I remember an unfurnished ground floor room near an alley where a middle-age lady, probably the superintendent of the building, was always present during the rehearsals. After each weekly rehearsal, two of us carried two or three galvanized containers of ashes to the street: these were the residue from the furnace that heated and provided hot water for the building. In addition I think we paid the lady a few dollars for the use of the hall. It must have been 1944 when two soldiers just discharged who were older and former band members came by to say hello to musicians who had been with the band before I joined.

The Rhythm Kings had a loyal following and were popular among high school and college crowds in and around Cincinnati, northern Kentucky and Indiana. One fellow followed the band and stood in front of the band wherever we performed in the Cincinnati area.<sup>1</sup> We frequently played in Cincinnati for dances at the Xavier University Field House. This was a cavernous building where the sound echoed for a few seconds. Acoustically it was a horrendous place to perform. I don't remember who in the band was in charge of booking engagements for us, but we were always busy on Friday and Saturday.

If I was assured of a ride to my home after gigs, Al Winger, Dick and Warren Herminghausen, Jim Ahern and I went to the Barn and the Hangar, two downtown Cincinnati bars. They were connected

with entrances on Walnut Street and the alley along side the building between 6th and 7th Streets. Two black musicians, a pianist and guitarist—I think his name was Mousy—played there, and it was a pleasure to listen to them. On a few occasions some of us, one at a time, joined them on the small stand behind and above the bar.

It was 1944 or 1945 when, as soon as the school day ended, I often ran to the bus stop to get to downtown Cincinnati and hear Woody Herman's band at the Albee Theater. At that time, live entertainment would alternate with the current movie four times each day. Almost every week a different package of traveling entertainers would perform, and depending on what band was performing, a trip to the Albee Theatre was part of my personal musical curriculum, as it was for other young, aspiring jazz musicians in Cincinnati.

After watching the movie twice, in order to see and hear the band a second time, I raced to the stage door on Vine Street, south of 5th Street to get Woody Herman's autograph. I was thinking what a thrill it would be to play with a band like this. Ten years later I was a member of the Woody Herman orchestra. If under fifty years of age, you might be interested to know that people entered a movie theater with no regard to when the film began. When the film reached the point where you entered, you exited the theater. Consequently, patrons were arriving and leaving during each film. It could have been Alfred Hitchcock who changed this ludicrous practice. He insisted that no one enter a theater after the movie *Psycho* began. The primary reason movie-goers were unconcerned about the starting time of a movie, especially during the summer, was because they wanted to escape the heat in an air conditioned theater.

During my high school years and early trombone-playing days, I would rush home from school on a particular day to hear a fifteen-minute broadcast from New York City. One of my heroes, Raymond Scott, who had a traveling band for a while, became musical director at CBS. Many of his arrangements were available for purchase and the Rhythm Kings had them all; *In a Magic Garden* is one that I remember. Thirty years later in New York City I was eating dinner on a Monday or Tuesday and the phone rang. Eddie Bert called to say that a recording date was going into overtime and he had to leave for another recording date. Eddie wanted to know if I could finish



the date for him. I jumped into a cab and went the thirty-five blocks to the studio. The leader of the date was Raymond Scott, my teenage hero; it was one of the last recordings he did before he retired.

Members of the Rhythm Kings went to see Georgie Auld, Raymond Scott and other traveling bands when they came to Cincinnati. If we knew in advance that one of our favorite bands would be in town, we would not accept a gig on that night. There was a ballroom in the West End of Cincinnati on 5th or 6th Streets where black bands played. I went there to hear Billy Eckstine's band. It was an all star band with Shadow Wilson playing drums, and Dexter Gordon and Gene Ammons in the sax section. Eckstine was known for his rich baritone voice and also played satisfactory jazz valve trombone. Five or six of my musician friends, I and perhaps a few others were the only white people there. Another venue for black bands was the Greystone Ballroom, which was the Topper Club in the Music Hall Building just north of the Cincinnati central business district. The Greystone Ballroom adopted this name when black bands played there, which could have been any night except Saturday, when white bands performed there. I went there to hear Andy Kirk, Earl Hines and Erskine Hawkins. Again, white patrons were in the minority. (Entertainment venues in Cincinnati remained segregated until 1961.) As a young musician I had heard of the Cotton Club, a club in the black section in the West End, but I don't remember going there. (At the time crime was associated with the West End, consequently, with few exceptions, my friends and I seldom ventured west of Central Avenue.)

Although both black and white professional musicians were part of the American Federation of Musicians, Cincinnati, Local 1 and some other cities had segregated unions. Black musicians in Cincinnati belonged to Local 814 until 1971. Before blacks were members of Local 1 they seldom worked with white bands that performed for white audiences. However, as you might guess, white musicians were accepted among black musicians and audiences.<sup>2</sup>

In those formative years of improvising jazz solos we imitated and borrowed improvised licks and phrases from all the jazz greats. All players do this until they find their own personal way of expressing themselves. Nevertheless, borrowing and paying homage to heroes continues by all jazz players. Lester Young<sup>3</sup> and Charlie Parker,



among others borrowed from themselves; they had their favorite “licks,” or phrases that they used periodically.

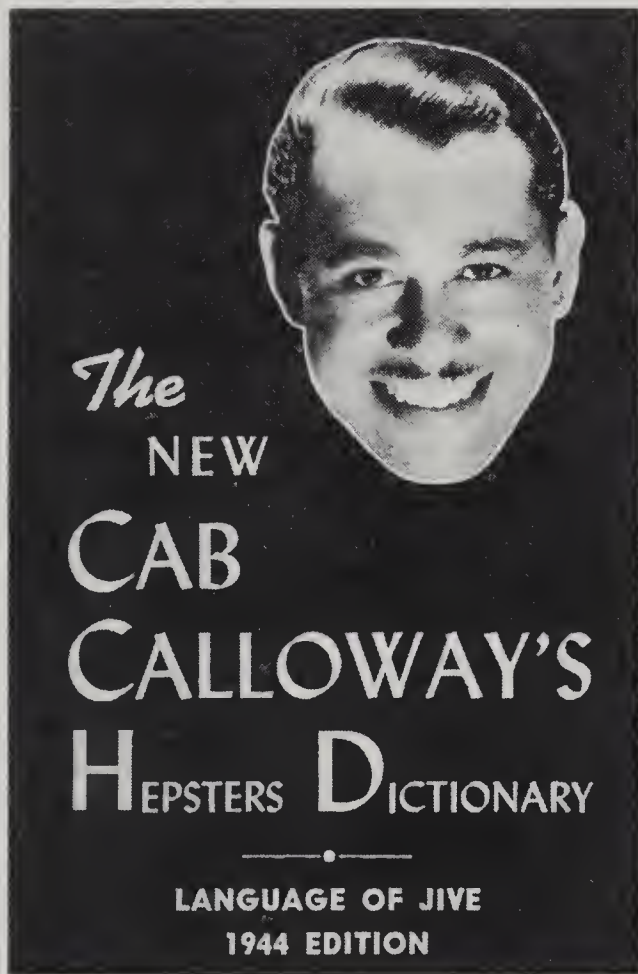
Borrowing exists in the world of classical music and there are numerous examples of cross pollination between classical, popular music and jazz. Classical composers borrowed from themselves and honored those who they admired. Beethoven wrote the *Eroica Variations* based on themes from his Symphony Number 3, the *Eroica*; Rachmaninoff composed his *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini* (*Caprice Number 24*); Brahms composed variations on Haydn’s St. Anthony Choral. *Artistry in Rhythm*, Stan Kenton’s theme was lifted from Ravel’s *Daphnis and Chloe*; Benny Goodman’s theme *Let’s Dance* is a direct quote of Carl Maria von Weber’s *Invitation to the Dance*. The only difference with the latter is that the original waltz meter was changed to a quadruple dance rhythm. The melodies of numerous popular songs are based on the themes of Tchaikovsky, Saint Saens, Borodin and Ravel. Most elder jazz musicians can play, note-for-note, the Illinois Jacquet saxophone solo recorded on Lionel Hampton’s *Flyin’ Home*. Portions of this “anthem” continue to be quoted as part of jazz solos.

When I was playing with the Rhythm Kings, Al Winger and I became close friends. Al, who played alto saxophone, quoted Johnny Hodges, Duke Ellington’s saxophonist, in his solos and I quoted Bill Harris, trombonist with Woody Herman. Al played alto saxophone and went to North College Hill High School. We usually finished gigs at midnight or 1:00 a.m. at the latest. Neither one of us was old enough to drive, and if we had been we wouldn’t have had a car. If the gig was on our side of town one of the older guys would take us to Knowlton’s Corner in Northside or drop us off at a connecting point for the trolley car. On Hamilton Avenue in Northside Al and I boarded the infrequent trolley that would take us to College Hill and North Bend Road, the end of the line where there was a trolley barn. (An inter urban traction line that operated from 1898 to 1938 continued to Mount Healthy, however, with automobiles so prevalent, this line was discontinued.)

Al and I would exit the streetcar and with our instruments start walking north on Hamilton Avenue in weather that was at times rather cool. When we arrived at the street that led to Al’s house, we said good night and I continued to walk for another mile. The

distance from the end of the trolley line in College Hill to Mt. Healthy is just over two miles. We frequently walked that route but thought nothing of it; there was no alternative. Busses to Mt. Healthy did not operate at that hour.

As young musicians with dreams, we imitated our heroes, Dizzy Gillespie especially. We adopted the jazz lingo that only we and our friends understood. If we liked something it was *crazy*, *groovy* or *gone*. Years later I heard about musicians in Les Brown's band who were on the road and they stopped at an eatery for lunch. One musician ordered cherry pie and the waitress said "I'm sorry but it's gone." The musician said "*crazy*, give me two pieces."



Jazz lingo most often began in Harlem and other inner-city black neighborhoods. As soon as the words and phrases were absorbed into mass general usage we dropped our terminology and invented other words to express our selves. Cab Calloway compiled the *Hepster's Dictionary* in 1944. In this pamphlet of about twelve pages he lists many jive terms including the following. *Threads* were clothes; a *pad* was a bed or your abode; *wheels*, your car; *chick*, a female; *canary*, a female singer; *bread* (a derivative of the commonly-used dough) was money; *juice* was liquor; *shades* were dark

glasses; *ground grippers* were shoes; *cut out* was to leave the premises; *Jack*, *gate* and *pops* were generic greetings for males, and dozens of other terms. (When Jack was picked up by the "squares," the greeting was changed to *Jim*.) If you "had eyes" for something, you had an interest in or desired something.

Another more extensive work of jazz jargon is *Dan Burley's Original Handbook of Harlem Jive* published in 1944 or 1945. In this book he transforms *The Night Before Christmas* into hip language. It begins: "T'was the black before Yuletide, and all through the pad...." A second version starts this way: "T'was the dim before Nick



tide and all through the crib, You could hear Joe Hip spieling the righteous ad lib....” At the end of the poem Santa makes his exit this way. “With these fine words, he cut through the slammer, And that was the last the cats dug of ole Santa.” Burley also presents hip versions of Joyce Kilmer’s *Trees*, “I think that I shall never dig, a spiel as righteous as a twig...” and fragments from *Hamlet*, *Othello*, John Greenleaf Whittier’s *The Barefoot Boy*, and other gems. The latter begins: “Blessing on Thee, Little Square, Barefoot Cat with the unconked hair; With thy righteous peg top pants, And thy solid hepcat stance....”

Yes, I thought Cab Calloway was hip because he dressed that way. Years later I realized that he played the part of a hipster, however, it was more of an act, a caricature. I discovered that he found fault with the solos of Dizzy Gillespie, a trumpeter in his band. Dizzy’s solos, he said, “sounded like Chinese music.” Dizzy, one of the creators of be bop was, with Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk at the pinnacle of hipness. Anyone who didn’t like their music couldn’t be hip.

“The jazz hipster was literally a cartoon as early as 1942, when animator Bob Clampett, a regular at the clubs of Central Avenue in Los Angeles, celebrated jazzbo panache in *The Hep Cat*, the first color Looney Tunes short, now banished as racially insensitive.”<sup>4</sup> Hep lingered on for a while with usage by those who *thought* they were on the “inside,” however those who *were*, dismissed hep for the perpetual hip. The métier of jazz jargon is ambiguous and contradictory.

*In Juba to Jive: A Dictionary of African-American Slang* by Clarence Major we are told that hip, an African Wolof verb, can be traced to *hepi* (to see), or *hipi* (to open one’s eyes), *dega* (to understand) and *jev* (to disparage or talk falsely); the latter two verbs could be the source of “dig” and “jive.” If accurate, the language of the hip can be traced to Africa.

But hip is a state of being. One doesn’t strive for hipness. One is either hip or is not. As one expert on the subject has stated, “You cannot capture hip in time signatures or modal scales. It is an attitude within music that can then be applied *musically* toward the rest of life. Ditto with fashion and literature. Living in rhythm—sonic, visual, intellectual, philosophical—is an essential promise of



hip. In the 1920s and 1930s, as animation was finding its stride, jazz was blossoming as the sound of American urban modernism. Jazz splintered time into discontinuous fragments, beginning it anew with each rhythmic return.”<sup>5</sup>

In the 1940s being hip was to be part of an elite group comprised only by jazz musicians, some writers and artists. At the turn of the 21st century hip became commercial and marketable. “As an *influence*, hip moves in concentric ripples—from hipsters to sympathizers to wannabes to the broader public. It separates the hip from the square. Within the initial in-group,” John Leland adds, “members develop hip gestures or codes as shorthand to speed up conversation. These gestures then spread through a series of intermediaries, some of them mass media, until cats who have never heard of ‘Salt Peanuts’ owe their walk and talk to Dizzy Gillespie. With each expansion of the circle,” Leland concludes, “the gestures, or *form* of hip, are received more as content, overshadowing the messages they were developed to convey. When too much of the message is lost—when the gestures no longer connect to the underlying idea—hip is reduced to a commercial shell.”<sup>6</sup>

This commercialization and hollowing of hip lingo took place, as Leland contended, and in a big way. I noticed it when living in New York City during the 1960s, the heyday of flower power hippie-ness. What drove it home initially was the reappearance of the term “groovy” among young hippies. I once futilely tried to explain to a young lady that groovy was a resurrected term from a different era and in that period carried a message specific to that time period. She laughed and insisted that it was something new. Cool had its beginning in the 1940s and has been in and out of favor ever since. However, it has become a permanent fixture in mainstream usage by all ages. “Hippie” was a recycled term from the 1940s. Anyone from that earlier period who played or liked jazz, wore zoot suits, was a good jitterbug dancer and spoke the lingo was hip.

“Like,” the omnipresent and almost required preface before any phrase or statement by teenagers at the turn of the 21st century had its beginning in the 1940s. It was part of the jazz parlance, but I’m so glad that I discarded it. Today the verb “to do” is used everywhere, including print media and by almost everyone as a substitute for practice, perform, operate, create, cook, etc. We have heard about

“doing” drugs so often that “do” and “doing” have replaced most specific action verbs. To “do lunch” probably had the same origin. I am annoyed when I hear television and radio voices use “do” as a substitute for an appropriate verb. To turn on was to get high from marihuana. Now “turn on” or “turn off” are common phrases used by people with little or no idea of the origin.

Some of the name bands had phrases that were linked to the leader’s name, *e.g.*, Woody Herman, “the band that plays the blues,” and “Swing and Sway with Sammy Kaye.” The latter had what jazz musicians referred to as a Mickey Mouse band, because the arrangements were simplistic with absolutely no jazz influences. (To paraphrase the Algonquin Roundtable’s Dorothy Parker, these ultra commercial bands ran the musical gambit from A to B.) Hip musicians applied opposing phrases *e.g.*, “Swing and Sweat with Charlie Barnett” and “Get Racy with Count Basie.” These were hot bands that deserved flattering accolades. Charlie Barnett was often called the white Duke Ellington and Woody Herman the white Count Basie. More *apropos* was the short-lived band of Georgie Auld that often played some of the same arrangements that Count Basie had. With the exception of pianist Earl Garner and drummer Shadow Wilson, the Georgie Auld band consisted of white musicians.

Other Mickey Mouse bands included Russ Morgan, Lawrence Welk, Guy Lombardo and Tommy Tucker. The theme song for the latter band was begun with a tick-tock sound created by the drummer hitting a woodblock. When a broadcast began the announcer would say—after a few tick-tocks—“it’s Tommy Tucker time.”

The *Island Queen* that took us to Coney Island in the summer played another part in my life a few years later. On summer evenings in my high school years, the *Island Queen* paddled up and down the river over a period of a few hours. Clyde Trask, who had a very good band, frequently played on this pleasure boat in the summer. It was a huge thrill to take that moonlight trip. We danced to Clyde Trask’s music and then went up to the open top deck. The sky would be full of stars and we would smooch a little and then go downstairs and dance some more. It was a period that I wish would have never ended. The tunes we danced to—*Day by Day*, *It’s Always You*, *I’ll Never Smile Again*, *Stella by Starlight*, *Darn That Dream*, *You’ll Never Know* and others—have become standards that will, I



hope, be around forever.

Another Cincinnati dancing place in the summer during the WW II years was Ault Park. Clyde Trask and Jimmie James were the prominent bands that played there. To dance outside under the pavilion was just marvelous. Six years or so later I played with both bands and another led by Al Cassidy, who had a steady Sunday gig in Elizabethtown, Indiana.

Throughout these pages you will see references to dance bands and jazz bands. As early as the time of the Turkey Trot and the Charleston in the 1920s, the ensembles that provided the appropriate music were dance bands. Until the 1950s bands that provided dance music were called dance bands. As popular music was influenced by jazz, new dance forms evolved and those bands that leaned heavily toward jazz were called both dance bands and jazz bands. When Jazz at the Philharmonic soloists and other bands began playing in concert halls for listening audiences, more often than not the designation of jazz band seemed more appropriate, though many of these groups continued to play for dancing. However, be bop, the new jazz, was more complex and musicians wanted to be listened to not danced to.

During the World War II years, musicians, like those from other professions, were drafted and this left a shortage of qualified musicians in cities around the country including Cincinnati. After a year or so of playing with local bands—this put me in my junior year in school at 16—I joined the union to play with Barney Rapp's band. Barney Rapp and the New Englanders, as his band was called, never achieved name band status. Nevertheless the band had traveled around the country. Barney married his singer, Ruby Wright, who years later sang on the *Ruth Lyons Show*, an immensely popular, local weekday WLW-TV show that featured many nationally known celebrities as guests. When Barney settled in Cincinnati he opened a night spot on Reading Road called The Sign of the Drum. Eventually the club closed and Barney's band worked weekends out of Cincinnati; that's when I joined him. (Barney discovered Doris Day and recommended the Clooney sisters to Tony Pastor.)

We traveled to Indianapolis, Columbus, Dayton, Lexington, Louisville, and cities in West Virginia. Most often we played in ballrooms however, military bases were also included. We worked



from one to three nights each weekend, and in the summer we played for a week or two at an out-of-town resort. For someone who was 16, I was doing pretty well. I think the union scale then was \$15 or \$20 per night. My friends had after school jobs that paid fifty-cents an hour. If I worked three nights a week, my income was considerably more, and I banked most of what I made.

The Barney Rapp band traveled to Indianapolis every three or four months, where we would play at a ballroom called the Indiana Roof on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Name bands would play there most of the time. We, the Barney Rapp band, drove to Indianapolis on Wednesday after school and after the gig returned to Cincinnati on the same night. On Friday we once again drove to Indianapolis, but stayed at a hotel for two nights and returned after we finished on Sunday night. I arrived at home on Thursday and Monday mornings just in time to have breakfast, wash my face and go to school only to fall asleep in my first class. The teacher of that early class was very understanding and considerate, because she never made an issue when I dozed in her class. As a member of my high school 4x100-yard relay team, I ran but was little help at a track meet on a chilly Thursday morning after returning from an engagement in Indianapolis.

A memorable incident took place at the Indiana Roof. Trombone players are always a little concerned about when you move the outer slide of the instrument to the end, or seventh position. If it slips out of your fingers and disconnects, the slide will separate. One evening at the Indiana Roof we were playing an arrangement of *All of Me*, and I had to rapidly go to the seventh position, which is the slide extended to the utmost. When I went for that B natural the slide slipped out of my hands. It slid straight through the band, across the dance floor, three feet lower, and with hundreds of people dancing out there, it continued to slide across the dance floor, and ended up against the wall at least 200 feet away. I could only think that it must have been trampled. A minute or two later someone walked over and handed me the slide. It didn't have a mark or a nick in it. I put it back on the inner slide of the instrument and continued to play.

Barney was much older than everyone in the band and he would tell us what it was like to be a professional musician in New York.

He said free-lance musicians were so busy moving from rehearsals to performances that included radio and recordings that they often had another musician play the rehearsal and mark the arrangements. Then, the musician who had been hired came in and sight read the part. I could not comprehend how people could sight read under those conditions. However, these stories about sight reading remained in my memory.

On a return trip from performing at the Indiana Roof, Al Winger, Carl Grasham and I were in the same car; Al was old enough to drive his father's car then. About midway to Cincinnati the radiator developed a leak. We found two empty Coca Cola bottles on the road and then crept into farmers' yards every five or ten miles and added water to the radiator from wells that we hand pumped. It was a long trip. (My father taught me to drive when I was about sixteen, but I didn't drive alone until I was eighteen. All cars had stick shifts at the time and I'm glad I learned to operate an automobile with one.)

In 1945 or 1946, the Barney Rapp band played a week or two at a summer resort in Devil's Lake, Wisconsin. On our way to the Wisconsin gig we made a stop in Chicago. Everyone in the band read *Down Beat*, the bi-weekly magazine that covered the world of jazz and dance bands, and we saw that Henry "Red" Allen was working in Chicago. On our way to the gig we made certain we passed through Chicago in the evening so we could hear Red Allen's group with trombonist J.C. Higginbotham. The door of the club was open so we sat in the car in front of the club and enjoyed the music.

The week at Devil's Lake was enjoyable and the Wisconsin reputation for quality milk was true: it was delicious. At the end of the evening it was not uncommon for me and a few others in the band to purchase a quart bottle of milk and consume all or most of it. I looked older than my age and became friendly with an attractive blonde waitress at the dance pavilion where we played. She was about nineteen or twenty and could have been a college student. One evening, perhaps the last, after we finished performing we walked down to the lake that was reflecting a full moon. We were embracing and kissing when she whispered that she wanted to make this night memorable. Seventeen and naïve I gave her an extra squeeze and a passionate kiss. One might associate a glass of wine or other alcoholic beverage with a moment like this. I was too young

to drink alcohol but I had my nightly quart of milk at hand.

During the time with Barney Rapp's band I was also fond of dancing. My sister Charlotte and I would jitterbug to records at home and of course at school dances. I was one of the few musicians who knew how to dance. For some reason most musicians never bothered to learn; I guess they were satisfied to make music. If I was not playing I was dancing; and I had access to a few good dancing partners. A few of the best ones were from North College Hill High School (Ruthie Dold, Petie Harris and Jean Jester, sister of Shirley, a Cincinnati entertainer); I went to the dances at their school and they would come to Mt. Healthy High School dances. I had almost as much fun dancing as I had playing.

For my last two years of high school and for a little while after I graduated I continued to play with Barney Rapp. Then he reduced the size of the band and discontinued using a trombone. So, for the next year or so, I don't remember playing that much in Cincinnati. I practiced a lot and annoyed the neighbors. One fellow in particular was heard to say, "Doesn't that guy ever play any songs?" Musical exercises are not recognized and appreciated by non-musicians.

For about a year I worked at Hyde Park Clothes where my father was the foreman of the trouser department. I pressed pleats on trousers. I went to work with him in the morning and then I would leave after lunch and return home by bus; then I practiced the rest of the afternoon. Later on I worked half-days for my brother-in-law, Lou, for a period of four or five months. I drove a delivery truck, delivering dry cleaning from his store in a nearby community.

If I wasn't playing music, I went with friends to Moonlight Gardens at Coney Island, the Topper Club and Castle Farm, where name bands played. By the time I advanced to my junior year, my next dancing partner and my next love was Marilyn. We dated for about two years. After she graduated from high school she worked in an office in downtown Cincinnati. She called one day and we met for lunch. She said if marriage wasn't in our future, our relationship was over. At the time marriage did not make sense to me because I had things to do and places to go. What ever heartbreak there might have been, my future in music was more important.

Cincinnati jazz clubs that my musician friends and I frequented were Danny's Bar and the 19th Hole, both on Reading Road in



Avondale. Teddy Rakel led the Teddy Raymore Quartet at one of these clubs. Raymore was a combination of Rakel and (Clarence) Moore, the guitarist. The bass player was Lee Tompkins and Larry Gilbert played trumpet. The group also sang hip four-part harmony. Teddy, who is about six years older than I is a wonderful pianist and continues to perform in Cincinnati on a limited basis.

There were other clubs where patrons ate, drank and danced. One of the last of these was Listerman's at 5046 Spring Grove Avenue, not far from Spring Grove Cemetery. At one time people could dine and dance nightly there. Before they closed, Listerman's operated on a limited schedule. When I played there with my sextet for six weekends in 1955 just before it closed, my brother-in-law jokingly said I closed Listerman's.

From the 1940s through the 1960s clubs around the country, including Cincinnati, held Sunday afternoon jazz dances. With the exception of a few tunes that were played at a tempo too fast for dancing, people not only listened to jazz, they danced to it. When the tempo was a bit frantic, some dancers moved in half-time. Bassist Red Kelly who played with Woody Herman and numerous jazz greats settled in Tacoma, Washington in 1986 and opened a jazz club where some patrons still danced on Sunday afternoons. With a pianist and drummer this rhythm section provided accompaniment for visiting soloists. On one Easter Sunday afternoon the patrons, perhaps stuffed with Easter ham, seemed reluctant to dance as the group played. In desperation Red grabbed the microphone on this holy day of resurrection and pleaded, "For Christ's sake, get up and dance!"

The Knickerbocker Club was located on Colerain Avenue near the Crosley plant just west of Central Parkway where Sunday afternoon jazz dances were held. Vido Felice was the bass player and played on an instrument held together with tape. After months of promising to purchase a new instrument Vido said he would have a new bass next Sunday. The final chorus of the last piece we played was a "shouter," with strong drum accents on the second and fourth beats. Vido commenced to swing, hurl and clobber his bass against the dance floor. He stomped on it and finished with the neck of the instrument in his hands as he hit the floor with it on two and four. The crowd loved it. This was twenty-five years before the rockers demolished their instruments during a performance. The following



**Sunday afternoon jam session at the Knickerbocker Club; Gene Hessler, Jerry Balzheiser, Bud Riser, Vido Felice and a guest playing the patched bass that Vido destroyed. Pianist Jerry Black is outside the frame of the picture.**

week Vido walked in with a new bass.

A new dance band came onto the scene about 1945. It originated in Philadelphia and then moved on to the national stage. Elliot Lawrence Broza was the son of the owner of WCAU, the CBS affiliate in Philadelphia. Elliot was the leader of the house or staff band at the station. One of the arrangers was sixteen-year-old Gerry Mulligan. One of their first jobs, after leaving the radio station, was the old Pennsylvania Hotel in New York City. (Pennsylvania 6-5000 was the telephone number, the origin of the Glenn Miller tune.) The hotel became the New Yorker; the current name could be different. The Elliot Lawrence band broadcast from there, as all bands did from various hotel and ballroom locations in the country. This band made quite an impression on me and my musician friends. In addition to the conventional instrumentation, Elliot's band included a French horn and saxophone players who doubled on oboe, flute and bassoon, uncommon at the time. The band came to Cincinnati and played at Moonlight Gardens at Coney Island, where we danced to the music but most of the time we stood before the band and listened. It was a marvelous band and, once again, it didn't occur to me that a few years later I would be playing with them.

It could have been about this time that my drummer-friend Carl Grasham was playing in the pit band at the Gaiety Theater, the burlesque house in Cincinnati. Bob Cross, the trombonist was ill and Carl arranged for me to take his place. My mother was extremely upset when she realized where I would be playing. But, at eighteen



I convinced her that I'd be so busy sight reading the music that I wouldn't see what was happening on stage. An attractive and well-endowed stripper named Sequin was the featured dancer that week. (I was able to see her; sorry mom.) A few years later in New York I worked with a pianist who had married her. Carl Grasham was a church-going Christian who taught Sunday school on a rotating schedule. The word about his Gaiety job traveled through the Sunday school attendees. Whenever Carl was scheduled to teach, attendance rose.

In the 1950s, a Lawrence Welk-type band came through Cincinnati and played at Castle Farm. Their trombone player became ill and the musician's union called me to fill the position. When I arrived I noticed an accordion next to each stand, which I thought was decorative because the leader played that instrument. During the evening, in the middle of one tune, everyone put down their instruments, lifted their accordion into playing position and began to play. So, I picked up mine and went through the motions.

The number of accordion jokes is almost endless. One is about a fellow who worried because he left his accordion on the back seat of his car and feared the instrument might be stolen. He returned to find his window broken and now there were two accordions. A musician's definition of perfect pitch is to throw an accordion and have it land on a banjo. The definition of a gentleman is someone who knows how to play the accordion, but doesn't. If you throw a set of bagpipes, an accordion and a banjo from a 20-story building which one lands first? Who cares!

Many trumpet and trombone players in name bands sang the praises of Donald S. Reinhart, a trombone teacher in Philadelphia, who addressed the mechanics of playing. I, like many others, was looking for ways to improve my playing, so, I went to Philadelphia for about three months. Don Reinhart called his method of teaching the pivot system. This referred to pivoting the slant of the instrument, up or down, ever so slightly as you ascend or descend to a different register.

Most people have an over bite when their jaw is relaxed. In a lesser number of cases, the upper and lower teeth meet in what is called an even bite; even fewer have an under bite, where the lower jaw protrudes forward. With modifications of each, all brass



players do not place the mouthpiece of their instrument against their lips in the same way. This is logical even to the non-musician. Nevertheless, some players and students become frustrated and limited in what they can do simply because a teacher said “do as I do.” When you realize what type you are and how the air stream enters the mouthpiece, based on your individual embouchure, you begin to play naturally. Most players do play naturally. However, I have seen frustrated players who were bound and tied to playing a certain way that was wrong for them. I played naturally but Don Reinhart helped me to understand the mechanics of playing.

I found a one-room apartment in north Philadelphia and found a job at the Tasty Cake Bakery, a popular bakery that supplied the northeastern part of the country. I moved trays of small individual pies into and out of movable kiosks. My shift was from about 6:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. This allowed me to practice most of the day; the lady who owned the suburban house and provided breakfast and lunch was extremely tolerant. I usually ate dinner at a Howard Johnson’s that was near the bakery. I became acquainted with one of the waitresses who, on occasion, put a dessert before me and didn’t always put it on the bill. I dated her a few times on weekends. After three months I was homesick and was happy to return to Mt. Healthy.

For two years I played some weekend gigs and practiced all day. In 1948, two years after I graduated from high school, after speaking with some friends, I decided to go back to school and get a degree and become a music teacher. I went to the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music (CCM) and enrolled in their music education program. I paid my own tuition because my folks didn’t have a lot of money and I had about \$1200 in the bank. That, plus what I made playing on weekends, paid for my tuition with no assistance from my parents.

At that time the conservatory was located on Highland Avenue and Oak Street near the Vernon Manor Hotel in Mount Auburn, just a few blocks from a Cincinnati landmark, Mecklenburg Gardens, which opened in 1865. Named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1975, this restaurant on E. University Avenue west of Highland Avenue that went into decline and closed in 1982 and regained recognition and popularity after 1996. Nearby was the Avalon, the “hang out” where CCM students discussed music over a glass of beer. A few blocks to the south of the Conservatory was an alpine

style building from 1917 that housed the Gruen Watch Company. The main CCM building had been a mansion that was converted into a school of music. There was also the Cincinnati College of Music on Elm Street, one block from Music Hall; it was founded in 1878. In 1955 the two music schools merged and become the College Conservatory of Music. Seven years later the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music became the fourteenth college at the University of Cincinnati.

The Cincinnati Conservatory of Music was founded by Clara Baur in 1867 and was located at different locations before it occupied the old Shillito mansion in Mount Auburn in 1902. There were two annexes: one on the grounds and another on the other side of Highland Avenue. The conservatory offered bachelor and master degree programs. For those who sought teaching degrees, the Bachelor of Science in Music Education, music subjects were taken at the conservatory—side by side with those working toward music degrees. Academic subjects, with the exception of English, were taken at the University of Cincinnati, the institution that granted the degree. A professor from UC came to the CCM campus and taught English classes. I was in the Bachelor of Science in Music Education program. Requirements at the conservatory were music theory, sight singing, music dictation, orchestration, conducting, music history, drama, aesthetics, major and minor instruments. Trombone was my major instrument and piano and voice were minors for me. In addition each of us in the music education program spent a semester learning an instrument from the string, woodwind, brass and percussion families. (For a year, or so I studied double bass with Joseph Van Reck, bassist with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, consequently, I was exempt from studying a string instrument.) These fundamentals were just enough to teach other instruments to students in public schools.

B.S. in Music Ed. students were not required to perform a graduate recital as B.M. students were. Those working toward teaching degrees were required to perform student teaching at elementary, mid-school, junior and high school levels during the third and fourth years. Teaching the lower grades was pleasant, even rewarding. However, teaching at junior and high school levels in my final year convinced me that teaching was not for me. Nevertheless, I

completed the B.S. in Music Ed. program.

At the university my subjects included history, psychology, biology, teaching methods and subjects I have forgotten. As a Bachelor of Science in Music Ed. student one of my required classes was with the band director of the University of Cincinnati marching band. We learned how to create band formations for football halftime shows. For my final exam I had created a plan on paper for a band to divide and form two cocktail glasses as they played *Cocktails for Two*. The unimaginative band director did not approve of a theme that, according to him, promoted drinking. As an elective I took a class in archaeology at the university. While at the University of Cincinnati I had the extreme good fortune to hear Robert Frost read some of his poetry. He came to the University about 1955.

The instructors and the curriculum at the conservatory were similar to, and undoubtedly equivalent to classes and the instructors at other major music schools in the United States. It is customary to hire principal players in the local symphony orchestra as teachers in the local music school(s). Most often this is the correct thing to do, however, marvelous performers do not necessarily make marvelous teachers. As previously stated, all brass players, based on upper and lower teeth alignment do not place the mouthpiece in the same position. It is the wise teacher who understands this and does not simply say "do what I do."

Some extraordinary players almost have an aversion to teaching. Gordon Pulis, principal trombonist with the New York Philharmonic and Metropolitan Opera Orchestra received numerous pleas for lesson from players while he was a member of the Toronto Symphony. After numerous denied requests from two trombonists in the Montreal Symphony, the two musicians came to Toronto unannounced and Gordon relented. One trombonist said that he was having difficulty in attacking notes softly in the high register. Gordon replied, "I suggest that you practice attacking notes softly in the high register." Gordon was a fantastic player, but not a teacher. A saxophonist repeatedly asked Zoot Simms, the great jazz saxophonist for lessons. Finally Zoot said, "Look, you already play the saxophone, right? So, go home and practice the saxophone."

When I began my studies at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, jazz was a nasty word. Most teachers and especially the director



said those of us who played jazz on the weekends destroyed what we learned during the week. Now the University of Cincinnati has a jazz program and the faculty consists of jazz players who perform in Cincinnati clubs. Some colleges, North Texas State as an example, attract students to their jazz program.

At CCM I heard the term perfect pitch for the first time: the ability to sing and identify any of the 12 chromatic pitches in the chromatic scale. I have relative pitch, or the ability to come close if not accurately produce a given pitch on command. By holding a trombone in my hands, or imagining one in my hands, I can usually sing a particular pitch.

My musical sphere was broadened when I attended the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. Until then, my interest was in jazz and popular music. Here I discovered Bach, Beethoven and Mozart, and was surrounded by students who were on the same road trying to learn everything they could about music.

Until that time, I had never attended a performance of a symphony orchestra; that soon changed. When some ticket holders were unable to attend a Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra concert it was customary for them to call the conservatory and offer the tickets to students. When I discovered this I would ask the switchboard operator if any tickets were available, and when they were, I took advantage of hearing a free concert on Friday afternoon.

I studied trombone with Ernest Glover, who was the second trombonist in the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. In addition to etudes, musical exercises and symphonic literature, Ernie introduced me to a series of five sight reading books, I think the name of the Frenchman who composed them was Marcel LaFosse. Each book of the etudes was more difficult than the preceding. In addition to the melodies that went where you didn't expect them to go, there were clef changes. The final book often had a different clef inserted before a sequence of notes, which kept me alert. Reading the more difficult etudes for the second, third or eighth time was almost like reading them for the first time due to the awkward melodies and the clef changes.

As in the families of other musical instruments like the string family of violin, viola, cello and double bass, the trombone family originally included a soprano trombone—now called the slide

trumpet—alto, tenor and bass trombone; there is also a contrabass trombone and it uses the bass clef. Some early symphonic music called for alto, tenor and bass trombones with music written in alto, tenor and bass clefs. Some purist conductors demand that trombone parts written in the alto clef should be performed on the alto trombone. Today, most trombonists play parts written in the alto clef on the tenor trombone.

One of my friends at the CCM was Ward Swingle. He went to Paris on a Fulbright Scholarship and stayed there. He formed the Swingle Singers and later a group called the Double Six of Paris. It was one of the first jazz-related vocal group; others followed.

Even though I was a brass player I was required to sing in the chorus at the conservatory. When I was introduced to the choral works of Palestrina and other Renaissance composers I fell in love with the sound of choral music. I seriously considered pursuing choral conducting; an interest that surfaced again and again in future years.

There is a particularly humorous incident that took place at the conservatory and I have told it many times. A friend, Dick Seifert was studying trombone with Ernest Glover, my teacher as well. Mr. Glover also conducted the concert band and the brass ensemble. After a rehearsal of the concert band Mr. Glover realized there was no time to gather together some music that he had placed on a table outside the concert hall. Dick, who did not enjoy his trombone lessons, was sitting nearby. Mr. Glover, who addressed all students as “my boy” asked Dick if he would keep an eye on the music until he returned from a lesson he was scheduled to teach in one of the annex buildings. Dick agreed. About 15 minutes later Mr. Glover came running toward the concert hall and said to Dick, “my boy, don’t you know that your lesson was to begin 15 minutes ago?” Dick replied, “Mr. Glover, you told me to keep an eye on the music.”

Nicknames were common at the CCM. I had two nicknames at two different times. In high school I was given the nickname of Pops. Louis “Pops” Armstrong was a popular figure at the time and since I was the only musician who played jazz, the type of music that many of my classmates related to, they bestowed this name on me. At the Cincinnati Conservatory my friend Dick Seifert was the first one to call me Prez and it stuck. Lester Young, the legendary

saxophonist with Count Basie carried the name of Prez, short for president because he was “the man.” I didn’t consider myself as “the man” among trombonists, but I liked the nickname.



### **Chapter III**

#### **On the Road**

#### **1949-1951**

The late trombonist, friend and colleague Jimmy Knepper drove up to a toll booth where a sign that stated "Cars 60 cents." Jimmy handed the collector a dollar bill and a dime. The collector asked, "What's this?" Jimmy answered, "An intelligence test." Bill Crow (New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 185.

AT THE END of the first school year at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music my bank account was empty. That summer I worked with a dance band at an amusement park on a lake near Toledo. On Monday nights, our night off we went into Toledo where there was a club that held jam sessions. Elliot Lawrence was in town and on one Monday some musicians from the band came to the club. That evening I met Vinnie Forchettie (Forrest), a trombonist with Elliot's band. He liked the way I played and it was the beginning of a friendship that developed when we worked together later in New York City.

Toward the end of the summer, when the Toledo gig came to an end, I returned to Cincinnati. With no money I was unable to return to college and uncertain about my future. Two weeks later Elliot's band came to Cincinnati's Moonlight Gardens, so I went there to say hello to Vinnie, but he was not with the band. I introduced myself to Elliot and he told me that Vinnie had just left the band. I asked if by any chance he needed a trombone player. He said, "Yes. One of the fellows is leaving next week." I came back the following night and played with the band for about 30 minutes. Elliot asked me to join the band a week later in Detroit where the band was staying at the Wolverine Hotel, where all the traveling bands stayed. That was the beginning of a wonderful experience traveling around the country.

With the exception of the ubiquitous Woolworth five-and-ten-cent store, each city was different with new experiences. With the exception of the Toddle House and perhaps a few other eating places with familiar names, this was a time before chains of fast food places were the same, everywhere.

When I had played with Barney Rapp there were numerous occasions

when we stayed in a hotel for one or two nights, depending where we were performing. With the Elliot Lawrence band, hotels were my home away from home, every night.

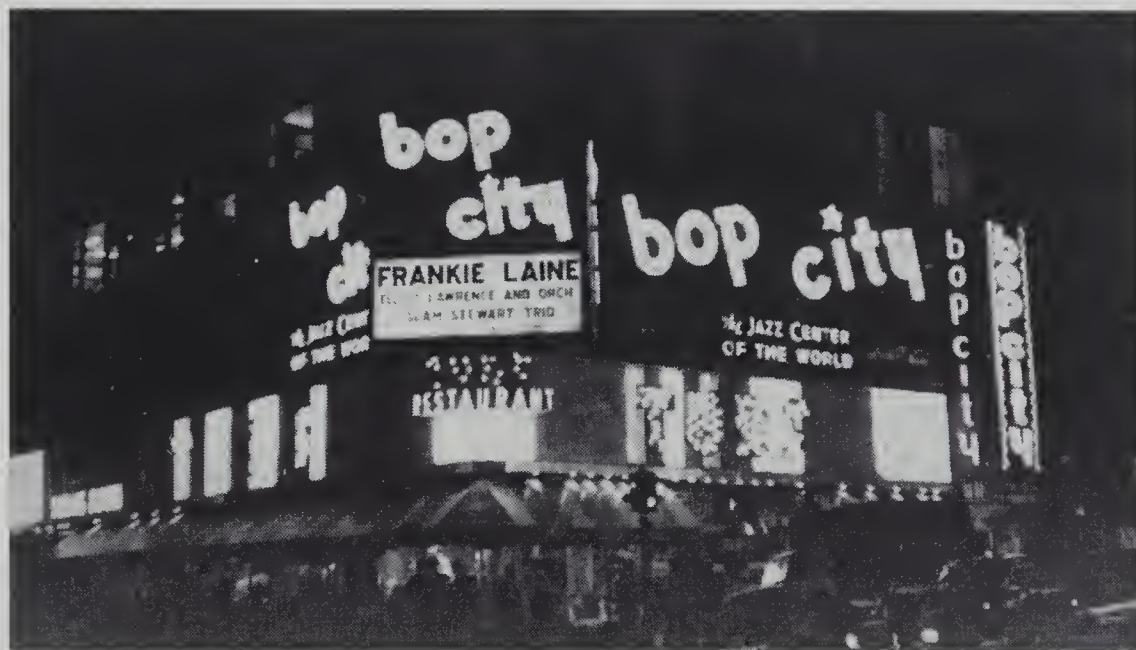
I should have saved all those monthly itineraries I had when I was working with Elliot; they would have helped to tell this story. We worked through the mid-West and after a few months we made a two-day stop in New York City to record for Columbia records. (The huge studio was at one time a church with wonderful acoustics.) This date included *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*. Gerry Mulligan, who plays on that record, had been arranging for the band, and then joined the band for a while. During my time with the band we were in New York on five or six occasions.

Months later we returned to work at Bop City (called the jazz corner of the world) a club named after be bop, the type of music that was popular among jazz musicians at the time. We played at Bop City during December 1949 into January 1950.<sup>1</sup> Frankie Laine was the headliner, and the Slam Stewart Trio was also part of the show. Carl Fischer was Frankie Laine's pianist and musical director; Morey Feld, a funny guy, was his drummer. We started each evening at Bop City about 9:30 p.m. and didn't finish until about 3:00 a.m. I think we did three nightly shows. By the time we finished and had something to eat it was 4:00 before we went to bed and I usually slept until noon. We stayed at the President Hotel on 48th Street. As I remember Bop City was at 49th Street and Broadway so we could be at the hotel in a matter of minutes. (Just a few doors away at 1619 Broadway at 49th Street was the Brill Building, synonymous with Tin Pan Alley where, if not for song publishers and promoters, the building would have been almost unoccupied.)

Bop City was on the second floor; on the ground floor of the building was the Turf, a popular Broadway restaurant. There were tables in the rear and a long stand-up counter near the entrance. This was convenient for cab drivers and others, including musicians, who were in a hurry. The cheesecake at the Turf was equal to the world-famous cheesecake at Lindy's; I thought it was better. Every night between the first and second show at Bop City a few of us would go to the bar at the Turf and have cheesecake and milk. One night I decided to have a second piece between the second and third show, which was a big mistake. That rich creamy cheesecake



made me extremely uncomfortable for the rest of the evening and into the following morning. In 1949 cholesterol was not part of our lexicon. Years later when I moved to New York I purchased two Turf cheesecakes at Christmas time and with difficulty carried them on the plane for my annual trip to Cincinnati.



**Bop City, the Jazz Center of the World, previously the Club Zanzibar above the Turf Restaurant.**

During our weeks at Bop City, Frank Hunter, trombonist and arranger for Elliot Lawrence, received an offer to become arranger for Sammy Kaye's band. The salary obviously was better; the music that Kaye's band played was certainly no attraction. After the last show on Saturday—we had Sunday and Monday off—Frank, who was my roommate at the time, drove to Pennsylvania to see his family and returned on Tuesday morning about 7:00 o'clock. I awoke for a few minutes and saw Frank writing an arrangement for Sammy Kaye; it was his "audition" arrangement. He completed it in less than an hour, took it to the copyist who had the parts ready for a morning rehearsal. Frank returned about noon and said he got the gig and would join Kaye's band in two weeks. The ability to write an arrangement in less than an hour without the aid of a piano impressed me then and still does.

Some time later when our paths crossed in New York, Frank Hunter told us of a humorous event. For a while Sammy Kaye did a weekly Sunday afternoon broadcast, part of which included Sammy Kaye reading a syrupy poem with matching background music. At one location, usually a hotel, during the rehearsal for the broadcast



Sammy was unhappy with the acoustics. After trying different spots in the ballroom of the hotel, he had the radio engineer set up a connection in the men's room, where the tile walls provided the sound he wanted. I doubt if any of the radio listeners had any idea that Sammy Kaye was emoting from a men's room.

Frank related another story about the time he was auditioning baritone saxophone players for Sammy Kaye. A musician walked in and mentioned that he really needed a job. Frank put the baritone parts of music before the musician who, looked through the music and said, "I don't need a job this badly," and left without taking his instrument out of the case. As I previously said, this was not a hip band.

During the engagement at Bop City, Gerry Mulligan, a few friends and I were standing near the entrance and Frank Rosolino came by; he was in town with Woody Herman. Frank, one of the most phenomenal jazz trombonists, could also have been a comedian, as could many other jazz musicians. He had all of us laughing as he held a small dog, a Chihuahua on a leash. On November 26, 1978 the jazz world was stunned when we heard that Frank, who was living in Los Angeles, shot his two sons and himself. His wife had died a few years earlier and he never totally got over the grief.

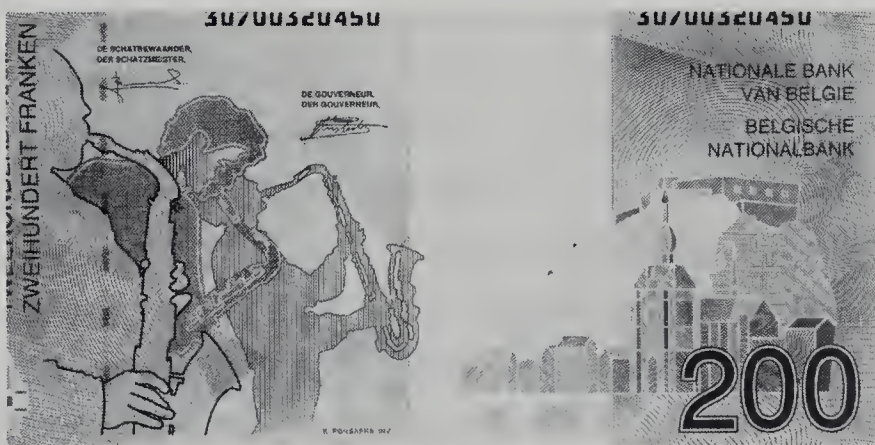
In between shows, some of us walked to 52nd Street that magnificent maelstrom of music where at least ten jazz spots stood next to one another, the Famous Door, Onyx, Jimmy Ryan's and the Three Deuces to name a few. Joe Techner, one of the trumpet player's in Eliot's band grew up in Philadelphia with Red Rodney, also a trumpet player who was then playing with the legendary Charlie "Bird" Parker at one of the joints on 52nd Street. So Joe and I walked over to meet Rodney. In those days the clubs were not air conditioned and left their doors standing wide open. The clubs were so small that you could stand outside and listen to a set before walking 40 or 50 feet or crossing the street to listen to someone else at another club. You could stand outside and hear Billie Holiday at one place, Dizzy Gillespie at another, and Lester Young at still another. You could work your way down the street and hear all the jazz greats without paying a cent.

### A Belgian Bank Note and Bird

After two years in the army, during the Korean conflict, I returned to Cincinnati, my home, to complete my undergraduate degree at the University of Cincinnati. One morning as I was about to drive to the university, I heard a brief mention on the news that Charlie Parker (1920-1955) had died. The Bird, as musicians called this extraordinary musician, was unique by the absolute meaning of the word. As Stravinsky and Schoenberg changed the direction of classical music, Charlie Parker and his colleagues turned jazz inside out.

Two years before my military service, I was in New York City with my first name band; we were playing at Bop City. There, through a friend, I heard and met Charlie Parker and trumpeter Red Rodney; I felt as though I had arrived.

We walked along 52nd Street, where, at the time, in the space of one block there were at least ten jazz clubs: the Three Deuces, the Onyx, the Famous Door, and other names I have since forgotten. From the open doors of these 1950 small non-air-conditioned clubs, one could hear all the jazz greats. If anyone then or until recently would have said that Bird would be recognized on paper money, I would have laughed. (The nickname Bird came from a Parker recording of *Yard Bird Suite*, an early example of bebop.)



The last Belgian 200-franc note honors Adolph Sax (1814-1894), who invented the saxophone in 1841 and had it patented in 1846. Sax studied flute and clarinet at the Brussels Conservatory. Not included in the basic instrumentation of the symphony orchestra, the saxophone, first used as an addition to the military marching band, is used increasingly in classical music. In *Le dernier roi de Juda* (1844), Jean-Georges Kastner (1810-1867) was probably the first to use the saxophone. Other composers to use the instrument were Berlioz, Ravel, Debussy and Vaughan Williams. As an exhibit idea, you could display the Belgian 200 franc note with the French 10- and 20-franc notes with Berlioz and Debussy, respectively; the inventor and two composers who used his invention.

The face of the Belgian note, including the realistic portrait of Adolph



Sax was engraved by B. Gregoire; it was designed by M. Golaire. The back, designed by K. Ponsazers, was photoengraved. The two tenor saxophonists on the right resemble a number of musicians. However, the portly profile of the alto saxophonist in the foreground can be none other than Charlie Parker. Anyone who has seen a photograph of him will recognize the profile.

Before Mr. Golaire, obviously a jazz *aficionado*, created his design, he researched the history of the saxophone and paid tribute to one of the greatest improvisors of all time. I have seen nothing written or have not heard any mention of this silent tribute, nevertheless, the Bird lives on a Belgian bank note.

In previous columns I mentioned a number of musicians that have been honored on paper money. If you decide to add the Belgian 200 franc note to your musical collection, you will get two historical images on one note: the inventor of the saxophone and the man from Kansas City who played as if possessed.

Later in my career, I performed with some of Charlie Parker's colleagues, Dizzy Gillespie among them. I wish I could say that I worked with Charlie Parker, but I cannot. Nevertheless, I still cherish that evening when I strolled along 52nd Street with the man who influenced jazz as only one or two others have. (Copyright story by Gene Hessler reprinted by permission from *Coin World* February 24, 1997)

When Charlie Parker's group took their break, Red Rodney and Bird, Charlie Parker, came out to the street. Joe Techner introduced me to Red Rodney and Bird as we walked down 52nd Street. All I could think of was, "if the guys in Cincinnati could see me now."

Between 49th and 50th Streets on Broadway, near Bop City, was Jack Dempsey's restaurant. The former boxing champion was often standing near the entrance as an incentive for tourists to have lunch or dinner there and ask the champ for his autograph. A block away on 7th Avenue was the Metropole where musicians played behind and above the bar that was at least 75 feet in length. A few musicians who I remember to have played there included Red Allen, Gene Krupa with a small group after he discontinued working with his big band, and clarinetist Sol Yaged who idolized and imitated Benny Goodman. Years later, and with so little depth of space behind the bar, Woody Herman's band stood single file above the Metropole bar.

After the Bop City engagement we worked with Frankie Laine a few times over a period of a year in different locations. We played the



Paramount Theater<sup>2</sup> on Broadway in New York City for five weeks; Frankie Laine was the headliner once again. At the Paramount, in addition to Frankie Laine, there was Patti Page, the popular singer who made *How Much is that Doggie in the Window* and *Tennessee Waltz* famous. She couldn't see very well without her glasses and she didn't want to wear them on the stage. The band would enter a pit area that would rise to stage level. When they introduced Patti, she would enter the semi-circular stage with only two feet of space to the edge before she reached the center of the stage where there was more space. She was so concerned that she might fall that she asked me, since I sat on the end, to take her hand as she entered and took two or three steps to where the stage widened and she could find her way to the microphone. As she left the stage I helped her again for each of the four daily shows. I met a few New York musicians who came around to see some of the guys in the band.

The Paramount ran movies between its musical presentations. This one lasted only about ninety minutes, which meant that we had to stay close to the theater. We decided to hang out in our dressing rooms and make model airplanes and boats. One day Don Lamond, who was then playing with the Woody Herman band, dropped by to see Ollie Wilson, the first trombone player in Elliot's band (Ollie had replaced Frank Hunter) Somebody took a picture of Ollie, Don and me, a shot in which we looked like triplets because we all had the same receding hair line. Unfortunately I later took that photograph out of my album to show someone, and I misplaced it.

Another time we worked with Frankie Laine was for a week in Galveston, Texas. I forget the name of the club, but it faced the Gulf of Mexico. We had a lovely time there for that week. Toward the end of the gig, a hurricane warning was announced and I remember on the final day you could see people boarding up all the buildings and the water was blowing up over the sea wall. We left early that next morning and headed north, fortunately. A few hours after we left, the radio news was all about a monster hurricane that hit Galveston. Two hundred miles away, we could still feel the wind from that hurricane.

On my first trip to New York with Elliot's band there were still a few "Dime-a-Dance" places (it could have been twenty-five-cents by 1949) operating on Broadway. These places had live music, usually

a trio. (Movies from the 1930s & 40s often had a scene in one of these dance halls where a wealthy guy wants to experience the world of the have-nots and meets a down-and-out dance partner and falls in love with her after a few ten-cent dances.) Bobby Jones, a tenor saxophone player I knew from Cincinnati was in town with Hal McIntyre's band, as I remember; Bobby and I went in to one of the "Dime-a-Dance" places, danced with the girls of our choice, and then the two of us went on to explore the Broadway theater district.

We went first to 42nd Street, which contained in one block at least twelve theaters; in the 1920s all had been the home of the first Broadway musicals. When I arrived in New York City these were movie theaters. When a new movie closed at a major Broadway movie theater, it would move to 42nd Street the very next day at half price or less. So, we always waited to take advantage of an afternoon movie at the reduced price.

At that time, in 1949 or 1950, New York was full of musicians who lived and worked there, plus all the traveling bands that were in and out of the city. There could be two dozen name bands in New York at one time. There were three theaters on Broadway, the Capitol, Strand and Paramount where they had live music that alternated with a movie. In addition there was the Apollo in Harlem, the Brooklyn Paramount, the Roxy Theater, the Radio City Music Hall, plus all the ballrooms, nightclubs and jazz clubs. Some bands were in town just to record. Other musicians also found work at the radio networks—ABC, CBS, and NBC each employed about one hundred musicians at any given time. There was a lot of work for musicians, then including gigs at The Palace Theater, one of the last bastions of vaudeville in the country (it closed in 1955).

When in New York City we stayed at the President Hotel, which put up a panel in its lobby that listed all the bands staying at the President. I think there were eight bands at one time—Harry James, Tommy Dorsey, Gene Krupa, Elliot, and four or so other bands, the names of which I've forgotten. Of course, if you went to a different hotel down the street you would see another list of bands that were staying there. They could have been there just to record, play one of the theaters, or perform on a radio show. It's difficult to believe there was that much work for that many bands in one city at one time.

During my time with Elliot's band, ballrooms began to close or

operate on a weekend schedule. Television was a novelty, a new toy for the masses that made entertainment accessible by pushing a button and people stayed home in droves. (It was the beginning of the dumbing down of our society.) Consequently, there would be an occasional week with no bookings. If we were in or near New York City, we stayed there for the week. If there was more than a few days off and I was close enough, I returned to Cincinnati. On one such occasion the band took a break in Pittsburgh and I went to Cincinnati and rejoined the band in Columbus a week later.

After I had been with Elliot's band for about a year we recorded the *College Prom* album for Decca Records, just after Herbie Steward joined the band. Herbie was one of the original *Four Brothers* on the Woody Herman recording. (Stan Getz, Jimmy Giuffre and Serge Chaloff were the other three.) Herbie and I roomed together for a while. One day in New York City after Herbie recorded his first solo album we were walking down Broadway and saw Miles Davis walking on the other side of the street. Miles spotted Herbie and yelled across the street in his raspy voice, "Hey Herbie, I just heard your new record, sounds good man."

### **Recording**

My first recording with Elliot's band (early 1950) at Columbia Records was on a 78 rpm disc, one tune on each side. The *College Prom* album was recorded for Decca in mid 1950 on a 33 rpm disc with four tunes on each side. Musicians and disc-jockeys often referred to tunes on wax. This refers to the original wax cylinder that Thomas Edison conceived in 1877. Records made of breakable Bakelite that revolved at 78 rpm were introduced around the turn of the 20th century. The heavy arm that held the metal stylus that activated the grooves on the disc did damage to the fidelity over time. The Victor Company began to market their Victrola in 1901. Their trademark was Nipper the dog seated before a large audio horn "listening to his master's voice" on record.

The 33 rpm records and the subsequent 45 rpm records were made of vinyl. Like the 78 rpm records, the 45 rpms also had one tune on each side. The 45s were convenient for juke boxes. Each song on all recording speeds lasted about three minutes. That was the maximum for a 78 record and that duration became the standard length of a piece of music. The three minute limit was carried over for each song on a 33 rpm record. Originally 78 and 33 rpm recordings were 10-inches across. There was an exception. Before 33 and the smaller 45 rpm records were introduced



some classical recordings at 78 rpm were pressed on a 12-inch disc. Soon after the 10-inch LP (long playing) records became popular, a 12-inch version appeared. The length of songs began to lengthen on the larger disc. The original four songs per side on a 10-inch LP dictated the musician's union scale for a recording date in 1950. No more than four tunes could be recorded during a three-hour date. In the 1950s most 10-inch LPs required two or three dates at about \$40 per session, with no residual payment. We've gone from cylinder to disc to audio tape to compact disc to iPod to....

At that time and even years later when I settled in New York, one would run into or see a lot of recognizable people on the street, musicians and actors among them. One time some musician friends and I were walking down the street and ran into Dizzy Gillespie. We stopped and chatted with him for a while; he had us laughing as we parted. I never worked with Sonny Stitt, but I passed him a few times on the street in New York and he always said hello. It was a marvelous time and I was fortunate to have been there.

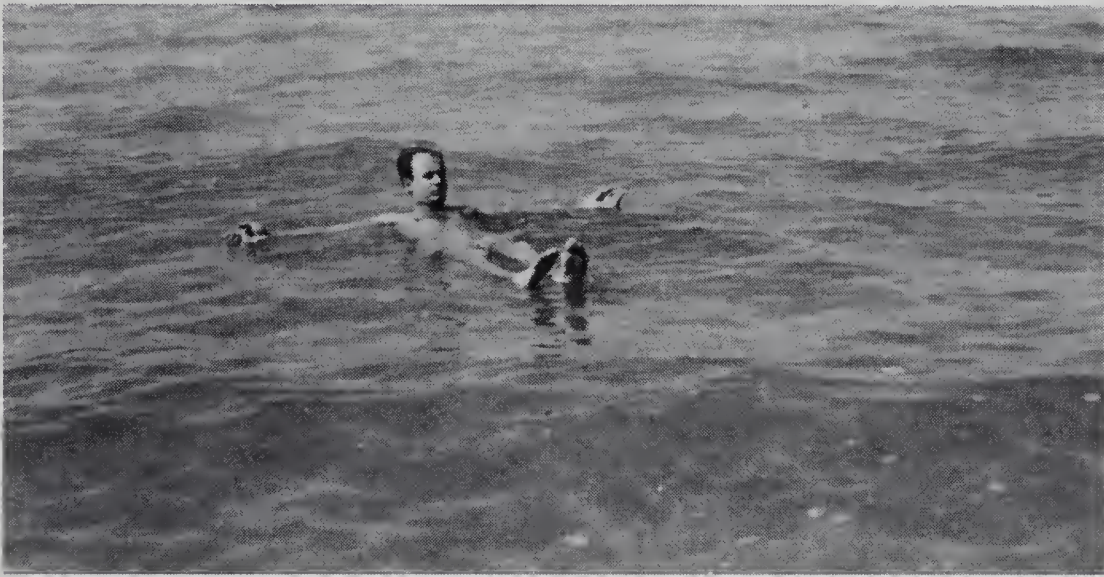
Almost everyone in Elliot's band had a camera and as we traveled around the country, everybody took pictures to record where they had been. I bought a camera; it was a Bolsey, a compact 35mm. Later on I had some better cameras, but this was my first one and most of the pictures I have in my album were taken with that camera.

I have only few pictures from when I traveled later with other bands. Traveling with the first band was an adventure with first-time visits to many cities and places. With subsequent bands I returned to many of the same places; it seemed more like a routine. Nevertheless, I am sorry I didn't record those trips photographically with images of all the musicians in the different bands.

In the dressing rooms of theaters, behind ballroom bandstands and anywhere else where bands played, it was a custom for musicians to write their names on the walls. I added my name to these lists that included hundreds of musicians, many of them famous.

Traveling by automobile through the Midwest and the south, Burma-Shave signs were always seen around the bend. These signs were first placed on well-traveled roads in 1925, and by the 1950s they were an American fixture. There were four or five signs about 100 feet apart, each with a few words that rhymed. Burma-Shave was on the last sign. Here are some examples. "Violets are blue,

Roses are pink, On graves of those, Who drive and drink, Burma-Shave.” Another that helped to sell the popular shaving cream was: “I’d heard it praised, By drug store clerks, I tried the stuff, Hot Dog, It really works, Burma-Shave.” To conclude this Burma Shave memoir: “Use this cream, a day or two, Then don’t call her, She’ll call you, Burma-Shave.” There were about 7000 of these signs on the sides of the road in the U.S., and I think I saw most of them. The other sign that was part of the landscape was “Chew Mail Pouch Tobacco.” Just about every red barn had this advertisement painted where travelers would see it. Farmers had their barns painted in exchange for the ad.



**Floating in the Great Salt Lake in Utah.**

Elliot’s band did one trip in the west. We traveled as far as Salt Lake City before heading back to New York City. We played every ballroom and amusement park in Denver, St. Louis, Kansas City, Oklahoma City, etc. I think I played most of the ballrooms and amusement parks in the country and a few state fairs. If my memory is correct we were booked into the dance pavilion at the Iowa State Fair for a few days. The atmosphere, surroundings and midway were similar to the portrayal of an Iowa State Fair in the 1945 film version of the musical, *State Fair* with Dick Haymes, Jeanne Crane, Vivian Blaine and Dana Andrews. The film was made five years before Elliot’s band played at the 1950 Iowa State Fair.

As part of the trip that included Salt Lake City we were hoping to get to California, but the Mormon city by the Great Salt Lake was as far as we went. Our return took us through Yellowstone National



Park, through the Dakotas and Minnesota. One day when we were driving through South Dakota we passed Lawrence Welk's band bus. He had what was then called a territory band before he became known nationally on television. The people that live in that part of the country are primarily Eastern Europeans and Scandinavians, and that's why his polka-type band and others who played similar music were so successful in that territory.

I remember an incident when we were heading through Yellowstone toward the Dakotas. We stayed in what was then called tourist cabins, before motels were in existence. In September in that part of the country it can be warm during the day and freezing at night. Trumpet player Joe Techner and I were rooming together at that time and we went to bed and were perfectly warm in our separate beds. We woke up around 5:00 in morning and it was freezing. There was a wood burning stove, and there was wood. So, after an hour of shivering I arose and stoked the thing and to get a fire going and jumped back in bed. This was an experience not easily forgotten.

We also hit Atlantic City, and like all big bands, played at the Steel Pier. The ballroom was at the end of the pier that extended into the ocean at least a sixth of a mile. We received our exercise by walking to and from the hotel to the ballroom each night for a week. Along that long walk to the ballroom there were amusement park games and rides. A major attraction was a diving horse ridden by an attractive young lady. The rider and horse would be transported by elevator to a tower about 100 feet above a pool. Every few hours, on schedule, a crowd would gather to watch the horse be coaxed by the female rider to jump from the tower into a pool of water.

Johnny Dee was the lead trumpet player with Elliot Lawrence and he came from Atlantic City. Stan Weis, a marvelous jazz tenor saxophonist in Elliot's band was also from there. It was probably Johnny or Stan who took us to a huge seafood restaurant where I had Alaskan king crab for the first time. During that week I went there three or four times for dinner.

Moving around the country we crossed paths with other bands. In Denver we ran into Les Brown's band, in Pittsburgh, Hal McIntyre's band was playing at a ballroom while we were booked into the amusement park. In Columbus we played the Deschler-Wallick Hotel



for a week. Woody Herman came to town for a one-nighter. Some of his musicians, including my idol when I was 17, trombonist Bill Harris, came to the hotel to hear Elliot's band. (Harris was truly a unique player. His solos, happy-sounding as they were, had an



**Johnny Dee and trumpeter Buddy Childers from Stan Kenton's band clowning in Columbus.**

underlying mournfulness about them with a slight emphasis on the last note in the phrase, similar to a grunt. I recently heard an early Klezmer recording and the phrasing of the trombonist reminded me of Bill Harris. Perhaps Harris heard something similar decades before I did.) At a later date in Columbus Stan Kenton's band came to the city while we were there.

I had many other memorable experiences as a member of Elliot's band. During his tenure with the band Gerry Mulligan brought arrangements that he had written for Miles Davis' nine piece recording group, arrangements that were later released as an album entitled the *Birth of Cool*. We rehearsed the Davis arrangements and Gerry asked me to play the trombone parts that J.J. Johnson and Kai Winding played on the Davis recording. These arrangements called for a French horn, which we had, and a tuba, which we didn't. So baritone saxophonist Merle Breadwell played the tuba part on bassoon, a part of Elliot's instrumentation. Those arrangements are now legendary and I'm grateful to have been able to perform them with Gerry Mulligan.

At one point after I joined Elliot Lawrence's band in 1949 we were playing McKeesport, PA for a week. It was a supper club with dining and dancing. It was a Tuesday night and toward the end of the evening there were very few people there. One of the trumpet players had been bugging Elliot to let him sing, so Elliot finally said go ahead. Denny did, and when he finished Elliot looked at the band and he



**Gerry Mulligan rehearsing his arrangements.**

rhetorically asked, “Anybody else?” I said “Yes, me.” Everyone in the band was startled. I told the piano player to play *All of Me* in the key of B flat, snapped my fingers to set the tempo, and sang it. As I finished the tune, Elliot looked at me and jokingly said “Now you ought to do a little soft shoe.” The rhythm section was still playing, so I did “a little soft shoe” tap dance. The small crowd liked it, and so did Elliot. That started my song and dance performance as a regular part of the band’s nightly routine, a not uncommon feature as several bands put on such mini-musical

shows, often with comedy, as the case, for example, of Les Brown’s band with Butch Stone, the baritone saxophonist and singer. I had learned to tap dance at the age of eleven, when I won eight free tap dance lessons by winning a radio amateur hour contest singing and playing guitar. So, twelve years I later made my debut as a dancer in McKeesport, PA with a few dance steps I resurrected from memory.

After the McKeesport engagement, the band had an open week so I went home to Cincinnati. I went to the Harris Rosedale Dance Studio and asked Harris if he could show me a few more steps to polish my act. With a set routine I rejoined the band. Bill Danzeisen, trumpeter and French Horn player in the band wrote an arrangement of *All of Me* for me. From that time, we, as a lot of bands did, at the time, put on about a twenty minute show featuring tunes that people listened to as they crowded around the bandstand. The show included Frank Hunter’s arrangements of de Falla’s *Ritual Fire Dance*, a *Porgy and Bess* medley, and my *All of Me* song and dance routine.

### **Tap Dancers**

Some of the best tap dancers, or hoofers from the 1940s, 50s and a little later who I admired were Bunny Briggs, Honey Coles, Gregory Hines, Baby Laurence, the fabulous Nicholas Brothers (Fayard and Harold), and Sammy Davis Jr. There was a one-legged tap dancer, Peg Leg Bates who tapped out intricate rhythms with one leg and one wooden peg leg.



The band's nightly show diversion expanded some by adding as a comic figure Johnny Dee, the lead trumpet player who stood just less than five feet tall. He sang *The Man I Love*, but altered it to *The Gal I Love*. "Some day she'll come along, the gal I love. And she'll be big and strong, the gal I love," etc., a line that usually brought a big laugh from the audience. One night I rolled up my trousers and placed a folded handkerchief over my head simulating a bandana, holding the ends beneath my chin and with a hand on my hip sashayed to the front of the band and kissed Johnny on the cheek. It evoked laughs and this spontaneous nonsense became a nightly routine.

For my song and dance Elliot always introduced me as the local boy; it didn't make any difference where we were, I was the local boy and of course people didn't know the difference. A few people would stop at intermission and ask where I lived when I resided in the current home town. I usually said that my parents left when I was very small and I didn't remember.

In Jackson, Mississippi I was introduced as the local boy. At the intermission, a couple of "good ol' boys" from Mississippi cornered me and, with a nasty attitude, said "you're not from here." They were looking for trouble with the "Yankee" singer-dancer. I was a bit nervous, but I finally convinced them, or I think I did with the story about moving away when I was a child. So, regardless where we played, Kansas City, Columbus, Ohio, Milwaukee or Detroit, I was the "local boy." When we played Cincinnati I really was the local boy in the band.

As the "local boy" with Elliot's band, he gave me a modest salary increase. In 1949 a few extra bucks went a long way, including payment for our meals and we always ate in acceptable restaurants. A decent hotel room would be about \$5 or \$6 and two of us always shared a room. From my weekly salary I deposited about \$50, almost half of my salary into a bank account.

Elliot's band traveled by automobile, usually with four musicians to a car with the exception of one station wagon that I think carried six or seven. I rode with three other musicians including Gerry Mulligan during his time with the band, and we often passed the time by playing cards. Johnny Dee, the diminutive trumpet player and a few others drove their own cars and Elliot reimbursed them



for gasoline money plus an amount for each mile covered.

Doing one-nighters around the country, we were seldom in one place long enough to have laundry done. Just about that time nylon shirts came on the market, and nylon shirts would dry in a hurry. I had at least two or three nylon shirts and would wash them out and hang them in the hotel bathroom and over night they would drip dry. Those nylon shirts were not very porous and therefore didn't breathe, consequently, they were very warm to wear especially in the summertime.

Johnny Dee couldn't be bothered with washing out shirts. Rather than wash a shirt as soon as we arrived at our destination he would purchase a new one, or two. Dozens of white shirts accumulated in the trunk of the car until we played someplace for more than two or three days; then he would take this mound of shirts to a laundry. Another series of one-nighters filled Johnny's car with white shirts and the laundry routine of dozens of shirts was repeated.

The following road story demonstrates the effect my mid western and Catholic upbringing had on me. A few times my mother sent a homemade banana loaf, one of my favorite desserts. When we arrived at a particular location a package with a banana loaf was waiting for me. At dinner one evening I carefully slid a knife up my sleeve so I could cut the desert when we returned to the hotel. Four or five of us devoured my mother's present. Then, the following morning I felt guilty that I had taken the knife. So, I went back to the same restaurant for breakfast and left the stolen knife on the table. Crossing the country we saw landmarks, monuments and sights from a distance and from close proximity. On a trip to the west I saw the Grand Canyon, the Petrified Forest, Yellowstone National Park and Pikes Peak. If we were in a city long enough we were able to catch up on movies in theaters that had matinees.

If we were in a city for more than one day, and there were things to see, some of us would roam around with our cameras. For some reason I found department stores interesting and there were often pretty females behind the counters to look at and perhaps engage in conversation. If there was time, my friends and I would look for a good restaurant.

There were times when we arrived late at our destination. This meant skipping dinner and going directly to the club or ballroom

where we changed into our band attire in the men's room or some other improvised dressing room.



**With be bop cap and glasses, clowning in a hotel bathtub during a tour with Elliot Lawrence.**

It was 1949 when Birdland opened on Broadway between 52nd and 53rd Streets; it was named after Charlie "Bird" Parker. The club was a little larger than the ones on 52nd Street. Birdland held about 200 people, at most. Harry Belafonte was one of the acts during the opening week. He didn't make it as a jazz singer, but became successful as a calypso and folk singer. Each week there were two or three groups at Birdland. For an admission of 99 cents one could stand, although there were a few chairs, behind a railing called the bleachers along the wall; about 25 people could occupy this space. To spend two or three hours at Birdland for 99 cents was a treat. As I remember the occupancy of Birdland was limited to about 200 people. If you sat at a table there was a minimum or a cover charge.

I went to Birdland often to hear Charlie Parker, Charlie Mingus, Stan Getz or Lester Young. Whenever we were in New York, especially when we played at the Paramount Theater, we went to Birdland after the gig. The last show at the theater was over by 10:30 p.m., then we rushed to Birdland, six blocks away, and at times stayed until they closed at 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. I assumed all the great jazz players who performed at Birdland made a decent living at what they did. I was naïve. When pianist and singer Mose Allison came to New York City he had a similar misconception. After meeting some of them he



said some of “the people I had been reading about in *Down Beat* just wanted to borrow \$5 from me.”<sup>3</sup>

In the late 1940’s and early 1950’s street musicians were uncommon. Today you find them in major cities. There was a legendary blind percussionist in New York City who was extremely intelligent and went by the name of Moon Dog. He had instruments similar to bongos with triangular heads on which he played interesting rhythmic patterns. You would find Moon Dog late at night in doorways on Broadway. He had someone notate the rhythms that he composed and would sell the written versions. Someplace I have a piece that I bought from him. He was sort of a legend, especially among jazz musicians. Somebody, I don’t know who, brought Moon Dog into a recording studio and he recorded some of his music. He died in 1999 in Germany; he was in his 80s.



**Elliot Lawrence Orchestra. Saxes: Stan Weiss, Vinnie Ferraro, Herbie Steward, uncertain, Merle Bredwell. Trombones: Sy Berger, Ollie Wilson, Gene Hessler, Bill Danzeisen. Trumpets: Joe Techner, Johnny Dee, Jerry LaFern.**

As all bands at the time did, Elliot’s band wore uniforms; blue suits that were tailored specifically for us, white shirts and a light blue tie. When I joined the band I was sent to London Tailors in New York City who took my measurements and within two days I had a suit made of durable material to withstand the wear it would receive. I bought shirts at one of the hippest shirt shops in New York City, Harry Kottler’s. He had two locations on Broadway, at 42nd and 50th



Streets. Many of the hip dressers bought their shirts with button-down collars there, as I did. These were such desirable shirts that, even after I left Elliot's band and came back to Cincinnati, I had a friend of mine in New York send Harry Kottler shirts to me. Later I discovered that Brooks Brothers made similar shirts, even better but more expensive.

In 1949 and 1950 when in New York with the Elliot Lawrence band, we often went to a building on Broadway at about 48th Street. Within that building there were two or three floors with nothing but rehearsal studios under the name of Nola's. There were at least eight studios on one floor where dance troupes, theater and night club acts, singers, Broadway show preparation, and others would rehearse, including of course dance and jazz bands. If you were in New York City, it was always interesting to go to Nola's and stick your head in the door and see who was rehearsing. Sometimes the door was locked, but there were times when those inside didn't mind if you slipped in and listened.

Word spread one day among Nola's *habitués* that Gene Roland, a legendary arranger who wrote a lot of the arrangements for Stan Kenton, Woody Herman and other bands, was doing something unique. Gene was rehearsing a big band with Charlie Parker as the soloist. (Gene was multi-talented, to say the least.) I think he played in every horn section in the Stan Kenton band. Gene also arranged for Count Basie, Artie Shaw and Claude Thornhill.

When I arrived at Nola's to hear Parker with the Roland band there were almost as many listening as there were in the band, which was a monster of an ensemble. The band had eight saxophones, including Zoot Sims, Al Cohn and Charlie Kennedy. The brass section consisted of eight trumpets, including Red Rodney and Al Porcino, and six trombones including Jimmy Knepper and Eddie Bert. There were two drummers and two bass players. Charlie Parker was standing in front screaming, screaming with his horn that is. You could hear him above the entire band. It was memorable. Unfortunately, the Gene Roland band with Charlie Parker never recorded or performed in public, it rehearsed for two weeks. It's remembered as "the band that never was"—just one of many ideas and concepts in the world of jazz that never materialized. Many of these ill-fated projects should have been documented. About this time Mitch Miller came

up with the idea to record Charlie Parker with strings, which they did at a Carnegie Hall concert.



**Passing through Stoneville in a southern state with Elliot Lawrence. The sign invited this pose by Herbie Steward, Vinnie Ferraro, Gene Hessler and Stan Weiss.**

There's a story about Gene Roland that took place in late 1940s or early 1950s when the laws were rather strict about marijuana possession. Gene was arrested a few times for possession. After spending time in jail, Woody Herman contacted him because he knew Gene's release was imminent and Woody needed some arrangements. After his release Roland headed for a Herman rehearsal, walked in, and stood in front of the band empty handed. "Where are the arrangements," Woody asked. Gene Roland took a couple of matchbook covers from his pocket. On the blank space inside Gene had notated some riffs. There he stood in front of the band singing parts to the saxes, singing something else to the brass, dictating what they should play and when. That was not what Woody had in mind, but Gene had the arrangements in his head based on the few notes on the match cover. Perhaps he couldn't get music paper when he was in jail. Maybe they wouldn't let him have any, who knows. More than likely Gene made the notations on the train as he headed for the rehearsal. (I recorded an album with the Sonny Iggoe—Dick Meldonian Band when I was living in New Jersey in the 1980s. Gene Roland wrote an entire album for us. *Blues in One's Flat, When You Done Went* based on *After You've Gone*, *Road Stop* and at least five additional tunes.) As an arranger Gene traveled with the



Stan Kenton band and at times sat in with the trumpet section. At one location he left his trumpet on the bandstand and remembered that he had when the bus was on its way. "Why didn't somebody pick up my trumpet?" he shouted. "You know I'm not responsible."<sup>4</sup>

In 1950, toward the end of my time with Elliot's band I met another extraordinary person, Rudy van Gelder, one of those multi-talented people with two careers. He was an optometrist in Hackensack, New Jersey, but he also had a recording studio in his house where he recorded the work of jazz musicians. Rudy invited musicians to use his studio and due to his expertise, many of the greats who recorded for Blue Note and other labels insisted on recording at Rudy's because he achieved the recorded sound that jazz musicians liked. Rudy once invited Elliot to record some demo sides at his place and it was a wonderful feeling to be where so many jazz legends had recorded. In 1959 Rudy left his primary profession and became one of the best jazz recording engineers.



**Elliot Lawrence's saxophone section rehearsing in top coats in a cold St. Louis ballroom during a coal mining strike called by John L. Lewis ca. 1950. L to R: Phil Urso, Andy Pino, Herbie Steward, Vinnie Ferrero, Merle Bredwell.**

I was on the road with Elliot Lawrence's band when the Korean War broke out. We were in Kansas when I heard the war news and I realized that I would be drafted. To put off what seemed inevitable to me I decided to seek a deferment and delay my service for awhile. So I went back to Cincinnati and reenrolled at the Conservatory and the University of Cincinnati. While there I played with the concert band and the brass ensemble, which consisted of trumpets,



trombones, French horns and tuba.

The conductor of the ensemble and my trombone teacher was Ernest Glover who established an annual competition for brass ensemble compositions. One year there were over 40 entries from all over the world. The final round of compositions were judged by Mr. Glover, composition teachers and, as I remember, Thor Johnson, the conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony at the time. The winning composers received cash awards, and the opportunity for me to rehearse and perform all this music was good sight reading experience.

## **Chapter IV**

### **A Bopster in the Army**

#### **1951-1953**

Pianist Willie “The Lion” Smith expressing his belief in astrology said “Take me [for instance], I’m a Sagittarius, my wife is Sagittarius and my chick is Sagittarius.” Bill Crow *Jazz Anecdotes* (New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990), p. vi.

SHORTLY AFTER RETURNING to the University of Cincinnati George Syran (Syrianoudis), a saxophone player at the Conservatory, told me about a friend, Connie Mohar, a saxophonist who was in the 3rd Armored Division Band at Ft. Knox, Kentucky. Connie told George that if he were to enlist at Ft. Knox, they would assign him to the army band when he finished basic training. George told me about this and we decided to avoid being drafted and join the army at Ft. Knox.

Fortunately things worked out just as planned. After basic training we were assigned to the 3rd Armored Division Band: George became a member of the band, and I became an instructor at the band training school, as prearranged. There were four band training schools in the country and at Ft. Knox there were four instructors. In addition to me, there was Julian Adderly who the jazz world came to know as “Cannonball,” (we called him “Fats”). Another was Donald Dierks, who after the service went to San Diego and became a music critic for the major newspaper there. Richard Swift, a composer from California was the fourth instructor. We taught classes in music theory and musical dictation, and I conducted the student band and auditioned musicians who were in basic training.

Whenever a new group went into basic training, those with any musical training would be sent to the band area and I would audition them. Those with enough talent came to the band training school after basic training and after eight weeks of training were assigned to a military band, often in Korea. Most of those who auditioned were rejected. I felt badly because I knew where they were going—Korea. A few begged me to accept them, but they just did not perform well enough. There were sleepless nights because I had to reject so many.

Ft. Knox, Kentucky was a partially segregated army base. (At the



Louisville bus station there were two water fountains and two different rest rooms for men and two different ones for women.) There were two bands at Ft. Knox, one black and one white. Even though the barracks were next to each other, they were totally segregated, but that really didn't mean much to the musicians. The bands played separate formations and on special occasions they combined, but in the evening we socialized, often in the black barracks. As you can imagine, both bands were pretty good. With George, Connie and me, there was a drummer from Youngstown, Joe Parlink, and some names that I forgot. With Cannonball, his brother, Nat, Eric Knight, a pianist and trombonist, Junior Mance, a pianist who had worked with Lester Young and Dinah Washington, and with the rest of us, we had a hot band that played for enjoyment and for dances.



**Singing with the dance band at Ft. Knox, KY.  
Saxophonist George Syran at left.**

During my time at Ft. Knox, if I wasn't working on the weekends, I could always find a ride to Cincinnati. At least once every six or eight weeks I would be at home for the weekend. During this time no musicians were sent to Korea and everybody felt secure at Ft. Knox. Then one day, out of nowhere, the drum major for the marching band received orders to go to Korea. That made everybody uneasy and drew attention to a notice posted on the bulletin board that sought musicians who wanted to attend the Naval School of Music in Washington, DC, a school that was open to people in all branches of service. (My brother, Jack, who was in the navy, was at the Naval School of Music.) Immediately, Cannonball, his brother Nat, George,

Connie and I put our signatures on the notice. The officers could not understand why an instructor would want to attend the Naval School of Music. I gave them a convincing story about why I felt I could benefit by going there. All of our applications were accepted.

At this time I had about ten months before I was to be discharged, and the program at the Naval School was five or six months in length. I figured this would be a good way of delaying or putting off being shipped to Korea, if that order ever came. While at the school my buddies and I met some good musicians from other military camps. There was Maceo Hampton, a trumpet player, arranger, the brother of Slide Hampton, the only left-handed trombone player I ever met. (I worked with Slide later in New York City.) Maceo organized a band to rehearse his arrangements



**With my brother Jack,  
in Naval Uniform.**

at the Naval School. It consisted of two trombones, two trumpets, three saxophones and a rhythm section. The sound was similar to the legendary nine-piece Miles Davis 1948 recording group.

All new students at the Naval School took a series of theory tests to see where they would be placed. There were at least 100 students in our class and all took a series of written exams, progressing to the next unless we were unable to complete the previous one. After four levels only four or five of us remained. At the penultimate level all left the room except my friend George Syran. He, alone completed the last exam. Everyone also played an audition and received a rating. A trombonist from Chicago and another army base, Eddie Kensick and I received the highest audition grades. As a result Eddie and I were featured, at different times, as soloists with the concert band before the end of our tenure at the Naval School.

While in Washington DC at the Naval School some of us went to the Kavakos Club on Sunday afternoon. It was a nightclub where a



fantastic local band played, and the place was always crowded with jazz fans. Musicians in the band included Earl and Rob Swope, both trombone players, trumpeter Charlie Walp, with whom I worked years later with Woody Herman, Marky Markowitz, a trumpet player I worked with in New York in the 1960s and baritone saxophonist Jack Nimitz, who later played with the Stan Kenton band. Joe Timer was the drummer and leader. He had a unique way of playing with brushes. Willis Conover, a local disc jockey, introduced each tune and talked about the arrangers and soloists. (He also played records as part of broadcasts for the *Voice of America* and introduced jazz to most of Eastern Europe during the cold war.)

Ben Larry, one of the tenor saxophonists in the Kavakos Club band sang *I Can't Get Started*. He altered the lyrics to pay homage to Lester Young and fit his hip image. One line went this way: "I've got a horse that wins every race, Count Basie asked me to take Prez's place...."

After hearing this great band I asked Joe Timer if I could come to his house and bring my camera to copy some of the arrangements so I wouldn't have to spend a lot of time hand copying each individual part. I was thinking about starting my own band when I was discharged from the service and wanted to include these arrangements in my future band's library. Tiny Kahn and Bill Holman had written some of the arrangements but Gerry Mulligan had written most of them. There was a dark room and facilities for amateur photographers at the Naval School of Music, and with my interest in photography at the time, I developed and printed pages of music.

I also befriended some of the guys in the Kavakos Club band and became better acquainted with Earl Swope, whom I had met two years before when the Lawrence and Herman bands crossed paths on the road. Swope was one of my favorite trombonists. He had worked with Herman's band when *Not Really the Blues* was recorded. Earl and Bill Harris both played in that band and in my opinion, although Harris was my first big influence, I was even more impressed with Swope's playing, who as it turned out took my place on the Lawrence band when I joined the army. Earl didn't play like any other trombonist. He played improvised musical lines that were more like those of a saxophone player.

Earl was one of the first trombone players who didn't evolve from the influence of Kid Ory, J.C. Higginbotham, Tommy Dorsey,

Jack Jenny, Jack Teagarden, etc. All the fore mentioned players played Dixieland-type jazz or were influenced by the genre. I had heard recordings of most of these players but preferred to listen to saxophone and trumpet players improvise. When I heard Earl Swope I had a trombonist to follow. He summed up what I had heard and put it in trombone language.

In *Down Beat*, the magazine that covered jazz and big bands, there was a column called Sidemen Switches. Whenever there was a change in a band, *Down Beat* would print that “so and so” moves to Tommy Dorsey’s band for “so and so” who went into the Army, or moved to another band. So when I left Elliot’s band to enter the army my name was mentioned, and of all people, my idol, Earl Swope replaced me, which I thought was rather humorous if not ironic. I have a copy of that column in my scrapbook that documents this improbable sideman switch.

I had subscribed to *Down Beat* since about 1941. As sports fans were able to relate batting averages and name individual baseball players from memory, I could name the featured players, if not the entire personnel of the bands of Harry James, Stan Kenton, Count Basie, Woody Herman, Glenn Miller, etc.

While at the Naval School in Washington, I often spent weekends in Philadelphia or New York and stayed with friends. I once went to New York for the particular purpose of hearing and seeing Elliot Lawrence’s band at the Statler Hotel (once the Pennsylvania Hotel),

## Sidemen Switches

**Tex Beneke:** Freddie Zito, trumpet, for Dick Nash (to army) . . . **Johnny Bond:** Billy Moschetto, drums, for Lou Conn (to army) . . . **Elliot Lawrence:** Earl Swope, trombone, for Gene Hessler (to army).

**Ralph Flanagan:** Walt Levinsky, clarinet, for Red Press; George Benham, tenor, out, and Moe Koffman, alto, for Murray Klarman (to army) . . . **Sammy Kaye:** Bill Farrell, baritone, for Lennie Greenberg (to army) . . . **Rene Touzet:** Harry Poole, tenor, for Willie Cervantes (to army).

**Jimmy Dorsey:** Riley Norris, trumpet, for Charlie Teagarden (to Ben Pollack) . . . **Ben Pollack:** Dick Cathcart, trumpet, out . . . **Tommy Tucker:** Bob Carter, bass, left to join Benny Goodman TV show.

**Harry James:** Louie Bellson, drums, for Dick Shanahan . . . **Tony Pastor:** Hersh Jones, trombone, for Mario Daone; Matty Harris, alto, for Buddy James, and Jimmy Gilbert, bass, for Paul Szilagyi . . . **Ray Noble:** Mickey Mangano, trumpet (from Tommy Dorsey), added.

**Hal McIntyre:** Bobby Jones, alto and clarinet, for Mitch Melnick . . . **Phil Napoleon:** Al Waslohn, piano, for Sonny Weldon . . . **George Towne:** Russ Sonjou, trombone, added.

**Irwin Kent:** Julie Mendelsohn, drums, for Irv Kluger (to *Guys and Dolls*) . . . **Alvy West:** Romeo Penque, baritone, for Jack Green-



near 34th Street across the street from Pennsylvania Station. Elliot had put together a fantastic band. The musicians included arranger and bass trumpeter Johnny Mandel—who later went to Hollywood and wrote *The Shadow of Your Smile* as well as other tunes—drummer Tiny Kahn, tenor saxophonist Al Cohn, and lead trumpeter Bernie Glow. It was a marvelous band. I sat there all night and listened and then took the train back to Washington in the morning.

Classes ended at the Naval School not long after that trip and our Ft. Knox contingent returned to Kentucky and resumed our positions there. Cannonball and his brother Nat, and I were all discharged at the same time, and Cannonball, who had taught high school headed not to his home in Florida but straight to New York City to try to launch a career on the jazz scene. As an unknown he went to jazz clubs and asked to play, or “sit in” as we would say at the time. He approached bassist Oscar Pettiford at the Five Spot in lower Manhattan and asked to play. Assuming Cannonball was a rank amateur Pettiford said “OK, what do you want to play?” Cannonball said “anything you want.” The group, thinking they would dismiss Cannonball in a few minutes went into *Cherokee* at a breakneck tempo and Cannonball just tore it up. The next day the word among jazz musicians in New York City was look out for this new phenomenal alto saxophone player.

I realized that after playing with Elliot’s band and with all those good musicians I met in New York and in the service I had a strong desire to organize my own band, and I did. It consisted of musicians, many of them students at the Conservatory and the Cincinnati College of Music, including a College of Music student, Dorrance Stalvey (d. 2005), a very talented tenor saxophone player and arranger. Dorrance and I worked out a monetary agreement for him to write arrangements for my band. I think Dorrance charged me less than \$20 per arrangement and I copied the individual parts.

## Chapter V

### Cincinnati Music Scene

#### 1953-1955

I WAS DISCHARGED from the army in early 1953 and returned to school to complete the Bachelor of Science Degree in Music Education program that had been interrupted by Uncle Sam. Fortunately the G.I. Bill covered my school tuition. To reduce expenses I lived at home with my parents and paid them \$15 or \$20 every two weeks. I attended classes at both the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and the University of Cincinnati. During that first summer my teacher, Ernest Glover arranged for me to play with the Cincinnati Opera Orchestra for performances of *Turandot*. I do not recall the circumstance; perhaps one of the trombonists was ill. This was my first time as a musician in the pit for an opera.

Beginning in 1920 the summer operas were performed in an outdoor theater at the Cincinnati Zoo. (Since 1972 air conditioned Music Hall has been the opera site.) The original location for the outdoor Cincinnati opera productions was incongruous, I and others thought. The opera clientele came well-dressed to the evening performances and it was not uncommon to see women with white gloves, in spite of the sometime oppressive June and July Ohio Valley humidity. To add to the singing and musical accompaniment, there was an occasional secondary unscripted accompaniment of animal sounds. Lions roared, birds squawked, elephants made their presence known, and members of the monkey and gorilla families called to one another. These sounds were heard occasionally at some inappropriate times, or perhaps appropriate, depending how much a particular singer was judged by the caged audience.

I realized that after playing with Elliot's band and with all those good musicians at Ft. Knox and at the Naval School that I wouldn't be happy playing with some of the local bands in Cincinnati so I formed my own band. It consisted of young musicians, many of them students at the Conservatory and the Cincinnati College of Music, including a College of Music student, Dorrance Stalvey (d. 2005), a very talented tenor saxophone player and arranger. Dorrance and I worked out a monetary agreement for him to write arrangements for my band. I think Dorrance charged me about \$20 per arrangement



and I copied the individual parts.

At the time, most of us were listening to and imitating Dizzy and Bird. Dorrance, who was more cerebral was a *devoté* of the Lennie Tristano school of improvisation, consequently Dorrance's solos were in the style of Warne Marsh, an original disciple of Tristano. (Years later Dorrance moved to California and gained recognition as an avant garde composer, teacher and concert organizer. During those early days in Los Angeles, Dorrance worked as a reader of water meters. Years later, during a visit he told me that he often lingered at a residence where Lennie Niehaus and other Stan Kenton musicians were rehearsing. For Incidents like this—and for going home early so he could practice—Dorrance was fired from his day gig.)



**Five members of the Gene Hessler Orchestra at the road stop in WVA: Eileen Nunneker, Alex Cirin, Jerry Black, Carl Grasham and Dick Westrich.**

With the arrangements for my band written by Dorrance and those I had from Joe Timer and elsewhere we soon had a workable musical library. Clyde Trask, who also had a band in Cincinnati, but worked at the Ruth Best Entertainment Agency, booked my band. The band began working almost immediately. I had three different libraries, one for a Woody Herman type band, four saxes, three trumpets, three trombones, and rhythm section, and a girl singer, Olivette Lawrence and later Eileen Nunneker (Seifert), both lovely ladies. The second

library was for a smaller band: three saxophones, one trumpet, one trombone, and rhythm section. And on occasion I would work with just a quintet: Dorrance, me and a rhythm section. The quintet arrangements were similar to those that Gerry Mulligan and Bob Brookmeyer recorded. Dorrance transcribed some of the Mulligan-Brookmeyer recordings. But the most enjoyable times were when we worked with the big band.<sup>1</sup>

Eileen was the featured singer with the band. Nevertheless, I also sang, mostly up tempo tunes like *All of Me*, *Let's Get Away From it All*, and others. Even though Eileen sang mostly ballads I also sang a few like *Day by Day*, *I Had the Craziest Dream*, and *I've Got You Under My Skin* and a few others.

**Eileen (Nunneker) Scott**



I was extremely fortunate to have Eileen Nunneker as the singer with my band due to her amazing versatility. She participated in a venture that could have been unique to Cincinnati, but, musicians and singers in other cities might have done something similar. The venture was a series of recordings that sounded like hit recordings but sold for less money. Eileen Nunn, at first and later Eileen Scott were the names Eileen used when she imitated popular female singers with hit recordings. These recordings included local musicians: saxophonist and musical director Herb Swillinger, who used the name of Herbie Layne, trumpeter Jack Levy, drummer Norm Ridge and the Art Rouse trio. When a string section was needed, students from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music were



engaged. I had always thought these records were purchased exclusively by people in the greater Cincinnati area. However, during a recent visit Eileen mentioned that in those recording days she received fan mail from as far away as Singapore.

Some hit records had multiple female singers. If it was a duo Eileen sang both parts with one part dubbed over the first. When imitating the (three) Fontaine Sisters or the McGuire Sisters, Eileen was joined by Clarice Wagner and her sister Dolores Nunneker; they were called the Three Queens. When four singers were required to sound like the Chordettes, the Three Queens became the Four Queens by adding another sister, Kay Nunneker. The Three and Four Queens have an obvious reference to Cincinnati, the Queen City. Other vocalists were hired as needed and among them were Bob Braun, Betty Baldrick, Don Bauer, Carol Christy, Greg Gordon, Sue Miller, Art Rouse, Bob Vance and Jan Lattier.

The voices of Teresea Brewer, Rosemary Clooney, Doris Day, Gogi Grant, Patti Page, Kay Star and Sarah Vaughn were some of the singers Eileen was able to imitate on records. Extremely versatile, Eileen was able to make her voice sound like a child and four of her recordings were done in this voice. One tune was *I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus*. These knock off recordings were available for purchase in Woolworth's and similar stores that resembled the defunct five-and-10-cent stores that were so popular until after World War II.

The owner of the company from 1953-1956 was Carl J. Burkhardt; the studio was located at 3930 Spring Grove Avenue. Big 4 Hits was the name of the first record label, which had four tunes on each disk. Gateway-Parade of Hits had two tunes, one on each side, and Top Tunes was the third label. These companies released hundreds of recordings, mostly what is now called country-western tunes. Eileen recorded a variety of 55 songs and says that she has 45 of these recordings. A newspaper clipping from March 6, 1954 announced that Eileen would appear with the Art Rouse Orchestra on the 11:00 p.m. *Jam Session*, a program on WCPO-TV, the announcer was Bob Braun. I always felt fortunate to have Eileen as the singer with my band.

While I had my band in Cincinnati, Miles Davis came to town. At that time only musicians and jazz fans were familiar with his name. (Miles became a commercial success later.) A black promoter was putting together a local rhythm section and also looking for a trombone player to work with Miles at a gig in a northern Cincinnati black suburb (part of the city of Lockland). I had no objection to the locale of the gig, but Miles had a reputation for an attitude that put

me off. I didn't want to be on the bandstand with him if he became nasty. I would have been nervous and on edge and I couldn't have relaxed playing next to him under this circumstance, so I declined. Consequently, the promoter brought in Slide Hampton who was living in Indianapolis at the time and with whom I worked years later in New York.

During these various activities in Cincinnati I received a phone call from the manager of Billy May's big band, who said that May needed a trombonist for the latter part of the summer. I joined Billy's band in Chicago. John Best was the lead trumpet player: one of the best and also a wonderful person and a sophisticated character. (I heard that when John was traveling with the Bob Crosby band they saw a sign at a Holiday Inn that read: HAPPY HOUR—ALL YOU CAN DRINK FOR A DOLLAR. John went to the bar and said, "Give me \$2 worth.") Billy May had a vocal group of three guys and a girl. I don't remember the gal's name. But later, the three guys, Bob Strassen, Bob Morse and Gene Puerling joined with Clark Burroughs to form the amazing vocal quartet the Hi Lo's. When the band headed back to California where the band was based, I think it was Dick Nash who rejoined the band and I returned to Cincinnati, just in time for school to start that fall. Again, I worked with my own band during the school year, but I managed to acquire from the May band two especially good mambo arrangements.

Soon after I returned to Cincinnati, Billy May decided to remain in California and saxophonist Sam Donahue took over the leadership of his band. When the band came through Cincinnati I called Sam at the Fountain Square Hotel and asked if I could copy the two mambo

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MAY**  
BAND  
*And the Great*

This Cincinnati newspaper ad for 20 Feb. 1954 was coincidental or prophetic. Five months later, I was a member of the Billy May band.



arrangements. He agreed, so I picked up the parts before they left town, copied and rewrote the saxophone parts from five to four parts for my band and within two days mailed the original parts back to Sam at an address that he gave me as he left Cincinnati.



**The four-member vocal group, and to the upper left of Gene Hessler is trumpeter John Best with the Billy May band.**

All the members of the band I led in Cincinnati thought the group was good enough to record. To raise money for the three hour taping session I accepted \$40 from each member of the band, ran the contract through the musicians union, and reimbursed my musicians by paying in installments with extra money over a few subsequent engagements. I retained the tape and I delivered copies of the records to local disc jockeys who played them. I was interviewed on WNOP, the only station in town with an exclusively jazz format. I used these radio airings as advertising material when we sent flyers to college fraternities, and sororities, and other potential clients in Cincinnati and adjacent states. We recorded at King Records in Cincinnati and used their engineer. King Records recorded a lot of rhythm and rhythm and blues groups including James Brown.<sup>2</sup>

During this period while I had my band Stan Kenton came to Cincinnati for a series of concerts. This was the band that included Zoot Sims and Lee Konitz, and featured soloists Stan Getz and Dizzy Gillespie. (One of the arrangements we played for Dizzy's segment was Chano Pozo's exciting *Manteca*, which means chicken fat or lard





**The Gene Hessler Orchestra performing at the University of Kentucky. L to R: Jerry Black, Olivette Lawrence, Gene Hessler, Harvey Abramson, Jim Smith, Dorrance Stalvey, Carl Grasham, Rus Girt and Milt Ostrow. (Photo by Mack Hughes) Below, listening to a playback at King Records.**



in Spanish.) I went to Music Hall not only to hear the concert but to see a friend, Leo who had been the “band boy” with Elliot Lawrence. (The band boy drove the truck that carried the instruments, and set up and packed up the music stands and other equipment each night.)<sup>3</sup> I remember I went through the musician’s entrance at Music Hall and a security man asked “Where are you going,” and I said “I’m with

the band.” I had learned that if you knew where you were going, you could usually bluff your way into places of entertainment.

I found my friend Leo and Stan saw the two of us talking. Leo



started to introduce me as a trombone player and Stan said “get your horn.” Due to a serious accident about a week earlier, the band was short two trombone players. One was Bob Dockstader, with whom I later worked in New York City, and the other could have been Frank Rosolino. So I jumped into my car and went home and grabbed my horn and returned to Music Hall.

There were back-to-back concerts, so I missed the first one, but I returned in time for the second one. From that brief meeting Stan remembered my name when he introduced every band member to the audience. Here is another example where my concentration on sight reading music paid off.

I missed what might have been a golden opportunity at the Kenton concert, this one by virtue of my own egregious mistake. Bill Matthews, a photographer and jazzophile came to the Kenton concert to get photographs as part of his regular routine of following musicians and bands to Cincinnati and near-by cities such as Columbus and Indianapolis, and then sent his pictures to *Down Beat*. Bill attended the recording session of my band and mentioned it to Stan. Stan told me about his recording venture, called *Stan Kenton Presents*, a series of records devoted exclusively to showcasing new talents in music. This was a golden opportunity for me. All I had to do was give Stan copies of the records so that he could, if he liked them, arrange to record my band for his label. I said “No, I don’t think you’d be interested it’s just a commercial band,” which it wasn’t. I had absolutely nothing to lose and yet I said “No.” It was an unexplainable and idiotic response. (This was the only overt example of my occasional lack of self-confidence. All the successes in my life came in spite of my periodic self-doubt.)

After the concert, Stan, June Christy, and Bill Russo insisted that I go with them to a bar on Vine Street below a restaurant that was then called the Purple Cow. Some musicians are known to be heavy drinkers and Stan and June Christy fit that description. I am not a drinker of hard liquor but I had a few drinks and I’ll never know how I drove home that night. June Christy and Stan Kenton were belting back shots of scotch like most people drink soda pop. Stan needed a trombone player and because he liked the way I played, he wanted me to leave with them that night, and I was tempted. They were headed for Detroit or Chicago. However, I didn’t want to leave

school, again, and I had commitments with my band. So as much as I wanted to go, I declined.

Since I didn't accept Stan Kenton's offer, I remained in school. The concert band at the Conservatory rehearsed two evenings every week. In my final year at school, saxophonist Dorrance Stalvey, who I mentioned before had written a lot of arrangements for me, decided that he was going to join Clyde Trask's band. At that time, there was a 15-year-old saxophone player from Walnut Hills High School who came to the evening concert band rehearsals at the Conservatory. I heard him warming up before the rehearsals, and I could tell that this precocious kid had talent. Each week he seemed to sound better and better. When Dorrance finally decided to leave, I approached this kid; his name was Gordon Brisker. As required, he joined the musicians union and started playing with my band, and from week to week Gordon's jazz improvisations became more creative. Gordon became a nationally known saxophone player, composer, arranger, leader, educator, entrepreneur and for a while musical director for singer Anita O'Day. I am always proud to say that I gave Gordon Brisker (b. November 6, 1937, d. September 12, 2004) his first gig. While preparing this manuscript Gordon died of cancer.

Through all this I kept working with my Cincinnati band but also worked on week nights at the Lookout House in northern Kentucky,<sup>4</sup> one of numerous clubs in Newport and northern Kentucky. Other clubs included the Beverly Hills Country Club, Primrose Club, Stardust, Yacht Club, Glenn Rendezvous and the Latin Quarter. Some of these clubs were notorious for their alleged connections to the Mafia and its gambling operations. I had no interest in gambling but on occasion, during a break, studied for a morning class at the conservatory or university. The band at the Lookout House played well into the wee hours of the morning. Often during the week I didn't get home until about 4:00 a.m. which forced me to go school with only a few hours of sleep. That wasn't bad, except on the mornings that I had classes that started at 8:30 a.m. At times I found it difficult to stay awake after late night gigs.

One day in 1954 the switchboard operator at the Conservatory told me there was a phone call from Woody Herman. I thought it was someone's idea of a joke. But it wasn't, Herman was indeed looking for a replacement for one of his trombone players, Keith Moon (who



had played with Stan Kenton's band), who had to take off a few days to attend his father's funeral. So I hopped on a bus for South Bend, IN and missed a few days of classes. But I thoroughly enjoyed playing with this band, especially playing in the same section with Cy Touff, who played what many thought was a valve trombone but was in fact a bass trumpet, which sounds rather like a valve trombone.<sup>5</sup>

My dual career as student and a somewhat peripatetic musician made a busy schedule for me, but I loved every minute of it. And it all worked out well, for in 1955 I graduated from the University of Cincinnati, the first member of my family and the entire Hessler clan to take a college degree. I had made arrangements to start work on a master's degree in New York at the Manhattan School of Music in September, and intended to hang around Cincinnati for the summer. But early on I was asked again to join Woody Herman's band. He was to play a one-nighter at LeSourdsville Lake, just north of Cincinnati's northern suburbs. So a couple of us went to hear the band, and Woody confirmed that he wanted me to join the band. I told him about my September commitment in New York and he brushed it off as no problem. He explained that the band was headed west and would disband in Salt Lake City in late August, whence I could back track east to the Big Apple.<sup>6</sup> (Woody disbanded his big band to form a smaller group called the Woodchoppers to perform in Las Vegas.)<sup>7</sup>

During that tour with Herman I spent a good deal of my spare time studying French in preparation for my studies at the Manhattan School in New York during the fall. But I also "lost" my trombone. One night we pulled into Chicago to sign in at the Claridge Hotel, where traveling bands usually stayed. We arrived around 2:30 a.m. and the next morning about 9:00 o'clock I went out in search of a Catholic Church. I noticed the door for the band bus was open; the bus had been parked on the street near the hotel. I peeked in to see who else might be up that early on a Sunday morning, and discovered that someone had burglarized the bus and taken some of the instruments, including mine.

We had that day off and Monday night we were scheduled to play someplace in Indiana. On Monday morning, as early as I could, I phoned the Conn Instrument Company in Elkhart, Indiana and explained my situation. I told them that I had played a Conn

trombone and needed a new instrument immediately. I took a train to Elkhart and tried out five or six instruments and, after I settled on one that I liked, a representative from the factory, drove me the 50 miles to where the band was playing that night. I thanked the representative and mentioned that I was about to move to New York City. He gave me the name of a photographer whom I was to contact for a photograph that would be included in a booklet of musicians who played Conn instruments.

Playing nightly with Woody Herman was never a chore, though some nights were better than others. The band always sounded good, but every so often there was a night when you felt as though everyone was connected and all plugged into the same circuit—the band was on fire. The smiles and glances within the band convinced you that everyone felt the same way. There were nights like this with other bands and when it happened everyone in the band sensed it.

Dick Collins, the lead trumpet player and excellent jazz player, acted as Woody's musical director. Woody always arrived a few minutes late and routinely left about ten to fifteen minutes before the gig was over. Before he left Woody called two or three arrangements for us to complete the evening. On one occasion but not the first time after Woody left, Dick Collins changed the routine and called up *Leo the Lion*, an arrangement by Tiny Kahn. At an appropriate place in the arrangement Dick "opened it up," that is to say extra solos were added. Woody must have thought that something like this had been going on. In the middle of one of the extended solos Woody walked back into the ballroom and had a few words with Dick Collins. After that incident we played the tunes that Woody named before his nightly early departure.

Woody's band played a one-nighter at an amusement park in Okoboji, Iowa; the bandstand overlooked the lake. It was another routine evening before we moved on to another city. However, one tune, *Early Autumn* made this night different. Ralph Burns, whose arrangements gave Woody's "First Heard" identity, wrote and arranged *Early Autumn* as part of a larger work called *Summer Sequence*. Stan Getz played the solo when the band recorded *Early Autumn* a few years earlier, and laid down one of those memorable solos that most musicians recognize as a classic. But in Okoboji Art Perie, who played the *Early Autumn* solo every night, gave his own



memorable performance, an inventive remarkably lyrical solo, as good as or better than Getz's. Everyone in the band realized what a superb solo it was. But like thousands of other jazz solos that were not recorded, they unfortunately cannot be retrieved. Saxophonist Ornette Coleman said that "Jazz is the only music in which the same note can be played night after night but differently each time."

Other aspects of the band's work was lost, too. Toward the end of that summer Woody asked if somebody would agree to organize and copy the band's "head" arrangements, musical phrases written on scraps of paper that players embellished with riffs played from memory. These phantom arrangements evolved over time and multiplied as players had new ideas that were inscribed on a scrap of paper. I considered volunteering but couldn't because of my studying French in preparation for graduate school. No one took on the task. That wonderful batch of head arrangements simply disappeared forever.

So, too, at least temporarily, did the model of Woody's big band. In August when the band reached Salt Lake City, the end of the tour, Woody had an agreement with the Musicians Union in Las Vegas: anybody who wanted to go to Las Vegas would be given a union card without going through the waiting period. Charlie Walp and a few others in the band took advantage of this offer, and I was sorely tempted to follow suit. But I stuck to my plans to go to New York and get my Master's Degree and, of course, I am extremely glad I did.

## Chapter VI

### New York City and Graduate School 1955-1957

A parent wrote to her newspaper: "I am furious to discover my daughter's history teacher is playing clarinet in a local jazz band several evenings a week. Can I complain to the school? Can the school stop him?" Bill Crow, "The Band Room," *Allegro*, Vol. CVI No. 5 (May, 2006), p. 23.

BEFORE I GRADUATED from the University of Cincinnati, I knew that I wanted to pursue a masters degree in musicology and a school in New York was the logical place to go, a city where I could meet and play with the best musicians. I chose the Manhattan School of Music. Massie Johnson, a timpanist who graduated from the Cincinnati Conservatory in 1955 decided to pursue the same program at the same school, so we decided to share an apartment in New York City. Musicology is a research discipline in which one studies the entire history of music and specializes in one time period for the purpose of writing a thesis on a composer or other aspect of that era. I chose musicology in large because of the influence of Charles Hamm, a composer and a marvelous teacher who brought music history alive in a course of his I took during my last year at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music.

I was extremely eager to get started on my musicological work, but first I had to get to New York City, find an apartment, and learn to get around the city. I had been to New York City before while traveling as a musician, living there would be a different story, however. I had done the obvious sightseeing but had never been to the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn or Staten Island. At the time I had a Ford station wagon, which had been necessary to carry music and music stands to gigs back in Cincinnati when I had my band. I loaded up the station wagon with clothing, camera and trombone and drove to New York City. When I entered Manhattan from the Lincoln Tunnel I was a bit overwhelmed because I knew that I was on my own.

I had made arrangements to stay with Sy Berger, whom I knew from Elliot Lawrence's band, until timpanist Massie Johnson and I found an apartment. Sy lived in Manhattan on 71st Street just west



of Broadway, and finding a parking place on streets in Manhattan proved difficult. Nevertheless, after a few times around the neighborhood I was able to park about 50 feet from the apartment building where Sy lived. After a brief hello to Sy I returned to unload my car and found the front window broken and my camera and a few other things missing. Hello New York! I was fortunate to have the window repaired overnight.

Break-ins, I soon discovered, were common in New York City as in most large cities. Within 30 minutes, the time it took to say hello to Sy, I lost to burglars clothing and other valuable things. This event did not deter me from living and working in New York, where I soon felt at home. But soon after the theft incident I rid myself of the car-albatross by persuading Allen “Snoof” Berk (a drummer from Cincinnati about to revisit the Queen City) to drive my station wagon back to Cincinnati.

While looking for an apartment I had to register at the Manhattan School and fill out forms for monthly payments through the GI Bill. I was there on the very last day of registration and one of the teachers, I think it was the fellow in charge of the Veterans department, asked if I planned to audition for a scholarship. This had not entered my mind. I rushed back to Sy’s apartment, grabbed my instrument and returned as the last one to audition. I guess the panel approved of the way I played because they gave me a half scholarship. With half of my tuition covered, and with the GI Bill, the financial pressure would be reduced during those first months in New York.

I found a three-bedroom apartment at 109th Street and Broadway and notified Massie Johnson, who was in Virginia. In addition to the rent being acceptable, the apartment was one block from the cross town bus on 110th Street that would take me to the Manhattan School of Music on the east side of town. My new pad was also just six blocks from the Columbia University Library, where with the blessings of librarians I did much of my research.

On those days when it rained, after waiting for the bus and then walking the few blocks to the Manhattan School, my trousers were wet and there was no hint of a crease. To handle this I set aside one pair of trousers for rainy days rather than donning a newly-pressed pair.

The New York subway system, part of the Manhattan Transit

Authority, was my primary method of transportation and I found it relatively easy to use, except for line changes when it was necessary to go out of the way places in Queens and Brooklyn. I was not a stranger to midtown Manhattan, and it didn't take long before I felt at home negotiating the streets of Manhattan, which, with a few exceptions are laid out like a grid.

Previously I mentioned that I was learning French because a foreign language was required for a musicology degree. No one told me that German was the appropriate language for musicology. So, I quickly found someone to help me with the German language.

At the Manhattan School of Music I was extremely fortunate to have studied musical theory with recognized composer Ludmila Ulehla. In addition to musical theory and history, there were classes with my musicology advisor, Dr. Luther Dittmer. We learned how to transcribe early medieval music, including lute tablatures that were written differently than current musical notation. He also taught us how to research information for our theses. My thesis topic was to catalog and transcribe the vocal and non-keyboard instrumental music of Giovanni Gabrieli. Being a brass player I, as all brass players, am fond of the music of this Venetian composer, who lived from about 1557-1612. Most of this composer's non-keyboard instrumental music was not written for specific instruments. However, most of Gabrieli's sonatas and canzonas—bright, declarative and joyous—seem to sound best on brass instruments.

Most of the first school year was spent in the New York Public Library and the library at Columbia University locating the sources of the composer's musical manuscripts. Even though Gabrieli was Italian, most of the literature that identified the locations of his work was in German—a struggle for me. One of the sources was in Poland, at the time a country behind the iron curtain. Dr. Dittmer said this particular request for microfilm copies of the manuscript might not be answered; but to my delight, it was. Over the summer all my requests for microfilm copies of manuscripts from countries including Italy, Germany and Poland were answered. When I returned to school in September, I spent a few hours each day with my head inside the old type microfilm reader transcribing the music. I had daily headaches.

Giovanni Gabrieli and his uncle Andrea both composed music for



the basilica of San Marco in Venice. They wrote for two and three antiphonal choirs of instruments and voices. A few years after I received my degree I went to Italy and visited Venice where I saw the interior of San Marco with its wrap-around choir-balcony, which begged for antiphonal music.

In music theory classes we were required to compose short pieces in the style of specific musical periods. Years later, during the one year at Columbia University Teachers College, when I considered pursuing a doctorate in education, we were given an assignment to set a poem to music. I chose a short one about falling snow by Robert Frost. I did what was required, however, I do not consider myself a composer.

The symphony orchestra at the Manhattan School of Music was marvelous; we rehearsed twice each week. It was a complete orchestra and all the students were excellent players. I was grateful for the scholarship assignment to occupy the first trombone chair in the school orchestra, which, as previously stated, helped to reduce my financial obligations during that time in New York. Even though I was trained for it I had never played with a symphony orchestra, except for the aforementioned performance at the opera in Cincinnati. Even though I had listened to classical music; everything we performed by Brahms, Bartok, Diamond, Schumann, Hindemith, *et al*, were first-time performances for me. Among symphony musicians there is the story about the British conductor Sir Thomas Beecham (1879-1961). He was liked by every musician who followed his baton. Sir Thomas loved making music but disliked rehearsing; he usually arrived late and left early. At a rehearsal of the Brahms 4th Symphony in London Sir Thomas conducted a few sections of each movement. Finally he said, "Ladies and gentlemen you obviously know this piece and I see no need to rehearse it further. I'll see you this evening at the performance" As he left the podium a young French horn player who had just joined the orchestra jumped to his feet and said, "Maestro, I've never played the Brahms 4th." Sir Thomas looked over his shoulder and said, "You'll love it." Beecham had great wit and is credited with other quotations. Among them is: "Brass bands are all very well in their place—out doors and several miles away." Asked if he ever conducted any music by 20th century composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, Beecham replied, "No, but I believe I once trod in some."

My last class of the week was over at 12:00 noon on Thursday, so my weekends were free to leave town. A few times it was necessary to skip the early classes on Thursday. This allowed me to leave town as early as Wednesday evening, if necessary. Instructors at the school were very understanding. They understood many of the students and I were professionals, and all the teachers were supportive of what we were doing. A lot of good jazz musicians were at the Manhattan School while I was there: Donald Byrd, Dave Amram, who later wrote the film score for *Splendor in the Grass* and *The Manchurian Candidate*, Eddie Bert and a few more. Gene Kuntz, an excellent classical trumpet player in the orchestra at the Manhattan School of Music was working as an extra with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra while he pursued his graduate degree. Some string players did the same with the New York Philharmonic.

The orchestra at the Manhattan School was complete with all necessary instruments and was so good it turned my mind around completely. After playing with the orchestra only a few weeks I thought I might pursue a symphonic career. Although I had legitimate training, jazz had been my primary interest until then.

I had to have an income and knew that I could earn money for living expenses by playing occasional gigs. As soon as I was able I applied for my transfer at the American Federation of Musicians, Local 802. Once or twice each month new union members were given an orientation on what one could and could not do during the waiting period. On my orientation day there were a few other musicians that had just moved to New York including Steve Lacy and Paul Motian. During the first six months of residency one could not accept any steady jobs but single gigs were unlimited. At the time the union offices were above the Roseland Ballroom. On Wednesday afternoons the ballroom area became the meeting place for musicians looking for work. A few hundred musicians gathered in cliques where contractors hired musicians for club dates, recordings, concerts, cruise ship orchestras, nightclubs and Broadway shows. On Wednesday's the Roseland Ballroom was as much a social gathering as it was a place to look for gigs. Even if you were working you made an appearance just to let others know you were still around.

If one worked in any club where liquor was served, it was necessary



to have a cabaret license or card. One of the first things I did when I arrived in New York City was to go to a grimy-looking office in Lower Manhattan where I was photographed and fingerprinted. It was, as I remember the same office where taxi cab drivers were screened and had their photos taken. If you had an arrest record you could not obtain a cabaret card. Charlie Parker had been arrested on drug charges a few times, consequently for a while he was no longer able to work in any New York jazz club including Birdland. I don't remember the circumstances that allowed him to but Bird did return to Birdland, the club named after him, where on March fourth and fifth 1955 Bird performed and then died on March 12. The cabaret card is no longer required in New York City, but I wish I had saved mine as a memento from that era.

My first musical gig in New York was a memorable one. After a few weeks in New York, I met a friend, Jack Laubach, a trumpet player from Cincinnati who had played at the Beverly Hills Club in Kentucky and with other bands in Cincinnati. Jack had moved to New York a few years earlier. I renewed my acquaintance with him and he asked if I was working on Saturday night. I wasn't, and he said he had something; it was with a Latvian band. (This is one of the many ethnic groups in New York that include Greek, Polish, Italian and Spanish, *e.g.*, and require ethnic music for dances and various other social functions). Jack picked me up and drove to the Bronx; a section of New York that was new to me. The drummer walked in with a suitcase, I wondered why he didn't have a bass drum. He opened the suitcase and proceeded to assemble a collapsible bass drum. The rim seemed to fold within itself and the drumheads on either side folded in half and then quartered. I had never seen anything like this in my life.

I thought this job would never end. Latvian music is similar to Polish music: a lot of polkas and other spirited dances. The arrangements were unconventional unlike most where the saxophones played a chorus and the brass played a chorus and you played a few music fills with occasional rests. I felt as though I was going through a trombone exercise book. Jack and I were looking at each other wondering how we could endure the pain. Four hours later—it seemed much longer—it was over.

Gigs like the Latvian one but also general club dates that included

wedding receptions and bar mitzvahs were not that enjoyable. However, once in a while the leader would come from a jazz background and we would play tunes at the appropriate tempo for dancing but the tunes would be more to our personal liking.

Among the first few gigs in New York were a few with Bob Friedlander, whose father was a film composer in the 1930s and 1940s. Bob rehearsed a band with nothing but his arrangements, which were quite good. We played two or three jobs, one at the Rustic Cabin.

A few times I played with a club date band that specialized in playing music for Greek dances. Unlike most western music that is written in quadruple meter, most Greek music is in odd time signatures, *i.e.*, 5 and 7. Just as Dave Brubeck's *Take Five* and *Blue Rondo ala Turk*, in 9 (2-2-2-3), seem natural, now, the Greek tunes became second nature after I played them a second or third time.

Another gig that I accepted soon after arriving in New York was a weekend at the Brooklyn Paramount, which offered live shows between showings of the movie. There were live shows on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. At that time, Bill Haley and his Comets had the hit record of *Shake Rattle and Roll*. It was a tune that they covered; a term that is used today that simply means copied. What they really did was steal the idea from Big Joe Turner, who recorded the tune first, and better, on a record label with minimum distribution. In that segregated era, a lot of what then was called "race" records (today we call them rhythm and blues) made by black performers were not played on the average commercial radio stations. Race records were only played on the few stations, primarily in the south that catered to a black listening audience.

Haley's groups recording of *Shake Rattle and Roll* appealed to a white audience only. Our band supported the group by playing innocuous figures behind Haley's combo that had two guitars. I remember looking into the audience of screaming white girls and wondering what the attraction was. Haley's group consisted of four untalented, unattractive white guys in their 40s posing as musicians. The music was simplistic rock and roll.

At the same time, soon after I arrived in New York, I made contact with Phil Sunkel, a trumpet player I had met at the Cincinnati Conservatory. In his basement apartment in Cincinnati we had



played the Bach harpsichord *Two Part Inventions*: he the upper part on trumpet and I the lower part on trombone. Phil is one of the great unrecognized trumpet players. He and Med Flory, who organized Super Sax in the 1970s, were rehearsing a small band that consisted of a rhythm section, three trumpets including Phil, a trombone and three saxophones. John Williams, not the film composer, was the pianist and a marvelous player who recorded a lot of records under his own name.

Bob Brookmeyer, I was told, had been rehearsing off and on with the Sunkel-Flory group and had become extremely busy and went on to other things. So Phil asked me to join the group. My first rehearsal with this ten piece band was the last for John Williams and Med Flory; both were headed for Los Angeles. But Phil received a contract from Creed Taylor to record his band on ABC Paramount Records. The album is titled *Every Morning I Listen to Phil Sunkel's Jazz Band*. We recorded ten tracks but only eight made it to the album. The final rehearsal before the recording took place in a studio in the Paramount Theater building on Broadway, a building that was later demolished. Phil recorded another album, *Gerry Mulligan and Bob Brookmeyer Play Phil Sunkel's Jazz Concerto Grosso*. I was asked to play on that album as well but was unavailable (and Eddie Bert took my place).

### **Gerry Mulligan and Judy Holiday**

Gerry Mulligan is one of the most photographed jazz musicians as you can see by flipping through the books on jazz musicians and the histories of jazz. Gerry also gained attention in the world of entertainment, including bit parts in movies. This recognition probably came from two of the women in his life who were actresses. One was Judy Holiday, a smart lady who often played the part of a dumb blond. Gene Lees' book about Oscar Peterson cites an example of her wit that was demonstrated at a social gathering of musicians, their wives and lady friends. In a discussion about a particular leafy plant coexisting with a type of lethal fish Judy quipped, "With anemones like that, who needs ferns."

The scholarship that I received at the Manhattan School of Music gave me the first trombone position in the student symphony orchestra and I was required to be there for all rehearsals and concerts. In addition I had to fulfill obligations at the school. Most

of the students on scholarships cleaned tables in the lunchroom, and I was assigned that task for a few hours each week. On my first appearance in the lunchroom, (which I was not enjoying) I couldn't have been there more than fifteen minutes when the fellow in charge of the Veteran's program at the school came in. I was a few years older than most of the other students and he had other plans for me. He gave me a task to perform once each month in his office. All the veterans were required to sign a form each month to get their monthly check. I organized these forms, a chore that couldn't have taken more than a couple of hours each month—but it fulfilled my scholarship obligation.

To make professional contacts I soon learned where musicians gathered and where bands were rehearsing. I took any opportunity to play for pleasure or money. Just as in any other profession you meet people and some take a liking to you. A week or a month after the meeting that person might need someone for a gig and you receive a call. The more gigs I played the more musicians I met. And there were always opportunities to play chamber music for pleasure in someone's apartment. These chamber music events most often consisted of a brass quintet: two trumpets, French horn, trombone and tuba or bass trombone. A considerable amount of music, composed or transcribed from other instrumentation, is available for this combination of brass instruments.

We often played the dramatic and most difficult passages from the symphonic literature, all in preparation for the gig that might include what we practiced. Two trumpet players who participated in these sessions were Fred Mills, who lived one floor below me when I lived in a fifth-floor walk-up on Claremont Avenue<sup>1</sup> (down the street from the Juilliard School of Music), and Ronald Romm.<sup>1</sup> I worked with both Fred and Ron in a variety of musical groups. About fifteen to twenty years later Fred, who was from Canada and Ron became two of the founding members of the extremely successful Canadian Brass. In one of these quintet sessions I met and played with Gerard Schwartz, extraordinary trumpeter who became a musical director and conductor of the Mostly Mozart series in New York and later the Seattle Symphony.

Gerry Schwartz and I also performed music for some of the many church services on Easter Sunday that included a brass quintet. I



always had a church gig in New York or New Jersey on this particular Sunday, sometimes two if the churches were close enough and the services were scheduled at convenient times.

The conductor of the student orchestra at the Manhattan School was Jonel Perlea (1910-1970), a Romanian, who spoke German, very little English, and was extremely demanding. But he was the best conductor I played under, anywhere. This wonderful musician had conducted at LaScala, the Metropolitan Opera in New York City and other major opera houses around the world. Musicians revered him. However, because of his inability to compromise, Perlea was unable to conform to American music institutional politics, not found in Europe at the time. Orchestra and opera managers found it difficult to work with him. Consequently, he was forced to accept lesser positions.

Jonel Perlea also conducted the Connecticut Symphony in Fairfield, about two hours from New York City. The orchestra was excellent and performed about six concerts each year. Fairfield was near New Haven, consequently many of the musicians were from Yale University. Approximately eight musicians from New York City played in the orchestra; I was among them.

There are a number of orchestras in the greater New York City area: the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the New Jersey Symphony and others, which means that musicians from New York played in many of these orchestras. I also played concerts with the Brooklyn Philharmonic.

The National Orchestral Association conducted by Leon Barzin was a training orchestra for students from Juilliard, the Manhattan and Mannes schools of music. To play under Leon Barzin, a world-famous conductor, was a privilege. If the orchestra did not respond as he wanted, he would say "no, no, watch the stick (baton)." On the second try without further words the orchestra did respond; the baton "spoke." Beethoven was once asked what a particular piece of his music meant, he said the music speaks for itself. When J.S. Bach was asked to write a method book on how to compose a fugue he wrote a composition instead, *The Art of the Fugue*. Leon Barzin had magnificent baton technique: his baton spoke for him.

I also played in ensembles at the Manhattan School. Gunther Schuller, French horn player, teacher and educator assembled a group that included me, to give a concert performance of the *Stravinsky Octet*. A recording of the performance with Gunther

conducting is in my record collection. Another ensemble was led by Zita Carno, a graduate student in piano and composition. Her I.Q. was probably off the chart and music dominated her life. Zita organized a chamber group to perform Stravinsky's *l'Histoire du Soldat*, which called for one trombone. We had about three rehearsals for the one performance conducted by Zita. Her ability to transcribe music from recordings was demonstrated by her transcription of a John Coltrane solo. She took her transcription to a club where Coltrane was performing and without identifying what it was asked him if he could play it. He laughed and said he couldn't play the complex solo. Zita was pleased when she told Coltrane it was one of his improvised solos. After graduation Zita moved to Los Angeles and became a successful accompanist.

Classical composers were always looking for musicians to play their music so they could make changes, if necessary after hearing what they had written in their score. One of these avant-garde composers was Charles Wourinen. I remember going to Columbia University to participate in a reading of one of his compositions. There were other similar occasions but I don't remember who was involved.

To improve my German, the necessary language for most musicologists, I went to a theater in Yorkville, the German section of New York City in the east 80s. A cinema there showed German films with English subtitles, which I tried to ignore. Near the theater, which as I remember was on 86th Street was a ballroom that catered to a young Irish clientele where a local band played for dancing. (An Irish ballroom in the middle of Yorkville made no sense to me either.) I decided to go to this ballroom because I wasn't dating at the time, and the ballroom was much like the ballroom in the film *Marty*, a place where single people went to find a dancing partner or partners. The walls were lined with expectant males and females. I didn't see anyone I cared to dance with and just listened to the band. I had noticed a rather plain young lady, who had not been asked to dance the entire evening, or so it seemed. The evening was just about over and I thought I would be chivalrous and ask her to dance so her evening wouldn't be a total loss. She said "No." Since it was the final dance of the evening, she probably thought I had other intentions.

During my last year at the Manhattan School the Boston Symphony



Orchestra came to New York and announced the holding of auditions to recruit players for the student orchestra for the summer program at Tanglewood, the summer residence of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Massachusetts. As the Boston Orchestra toured it auditioned musicians in major cities in the U.S. The New York City auditions were held at Carnegie Hall. At the end of the tour the best musicians that auditioned in the cities where the orchestra performed were notified that they were selected to come to Tanglewood in the Berkshire Mountains for six or eight weeks in the summer. At most auditions, in addition to pieces you were asked to sight read, you were asked to play something of your choice. In an attempt to impress them I chose the solo from Ravel's *Bolero* and I played it well and I was satisfied with my audition. Months later I was notified that I was one of two tenor trombonists chosen.

The Tanglewood student orchestra consisted of many of the best players in the country, many who went on to prominent positions in major orchestras. In addition to performing musicians there was a group of composition and conducting students. I befriended Kenneth Schermerhorn one of the outstanding conducting students who received the Serge Koussevitzky Conducting Award twice. Originally a trumpet player he also studied with Leonard Bernstein and was appointed assistant to Bernstein with the New York Philharmonic. Ken later conducted a number of lesser orchestras including the Hong Kong, Milwaukee and Nashville orchestras. Everyone assumed Ken would find a home with a major orchestra, but it never happened. He died on April 18, 2005 at the age of 75.

The conductor of the student orchestra was Eliazar de Carvalho, an energetic Brazilian in his 50s who was marvelous at leading an orchestra and did some astonishing things as a conductor. When he conducted complex rhythms he moved as though dancing. (Later when Stan Getz brought the Bosa Nova and the music of Antonio Carlos Jobim to the U.S. after discovering it in Brazil, I immediately thought of Eliazar de Carvalho.)

We were rehearsing something by Stravinsky that had cross rhythms where the brass played one rhythmic figure and the strings were playing a contrasting rhythm. Carvalho was leaning toward the brass section conducting for our benefit and with his left hand over his right shoulder he was tapping another rhythm for the string

players to see. He was an excellent conductor and it was a joy to play under him. He later conducted the St. Louis Symphony and did guest conducting in this country. I think he died in the 1980's.

The orchestra also played under Arthur Fiedler, the conductor of the Boston Pops, and Charles Münch, the conductor of the Boston Symphony at the time. We also performed an opera conducted by Lucas Foss, under whom I played years later with the New York Philharmonic and the Brooklyn Philharmonic. While the Boston Symphony was in residence at Tanglewood it performed weekly concerts. When not performing, I attended weekly concerts by the Boston Symphony during its residence at Tanglewood. In addition, I took in the chamber music programs played by members of the Boston orchestra. For me it was a summer full of music, listening, rehearsing and playing in public for large audiences. The stage was in the rear of a pavilion that was open on the sides. In addition to the pavilion seats there was a sloping hill outside where people brought blankets and picnic baskets to enjoy the music under the stars.

Near the Tanglewood grounds was a bar and restaurant where a few friends and I went to listen to pianist Randy Weston and his trio who played there during the summer. One night the owner came to the bandstand and announced to the audience that Clifford Brown, the brilliant young trumpet player had just been killed in an automobile accident. I add this incident to others that I associate with memorable events, pleasant and unpleasant.

The musicians at Tanglewood were assigned living facilities. Six or eight musicians and I lived in the carriage house behind an old inn. On weekends a trio played for dancing in the dining room of the inn. This group consisted of pianist Hod O'Brien, bassist Chuck Israel and a drummer whose name I forgot. I introduced myself and said that I was a jazz player, so I joined them a few times. Within a year I saw Chuck and Hod in New York. Later Chuck organized the National Jazz Ensemble. This group was the forerunner or genesis of Jazz at Lincoln Center, established in 1988, now under the direction of Wynton Marsalis.

I met some interesting musicians at Tanglewood, including Larry Bocaner, a clarinetist. When we returned to New York City for our last years of school, Larry and I shared an apartment on West 71st Street. He attended the Juilliard School of Music and I returned



to the Manhattan School of Music. At the end of the school year, Larry auditioned for the Denver Symphony and got the job and later went to the National Symphony. I also auditioned for the Denver Symphony, but didn't get the gig.

Many years later I was in Washington DC, called Larry and joined his wife in the audience at the Kennedy Center that evening to hear the National Symphony. We strolled backstage to meet Larry after the concert and found a line of people waiting to meet and compliment cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, conductor of the orchestra. The line was not very long so I thought I would tell the maestro how much I enjoyed the performance. As I approached he smiled and threw his arms around me and kissed me on both cheeks Russian style. We exchanged a few pleasantries. As I walked away I could see by the look on his face that he had mistaken me for someone else.

A considerable number of musicians and actors lived on the convenient west side of New York between the 50s and the upper 70s. On the express train it was one subway stop from 72nd to 42nd Street. From a window at my 71st Street second floor apartment I often saw Basil Rathbone walking down the street from his apartment around the corner on Central Park West. Jon Eardley, the jazz trumpet player who died young, lived across the street. Julie Baker, world-famous flutist, lived two blocks away. I met Julie when I visited trombonist-friend Sy Berger on 72nd Street.

### **The Dakota**

The historic Dakota apartment building, just one block away on the corner of 72nd St. and Central Park West was built by Henry Hardenberg between 1881 and 1888. The nine-story building with 85 suites was formidable. It had a guarded drive-in entrance with a central courtyard to provide light to rooms that faced inward. It was like a medieval fortress without a moat in the middle of New York City. I was not surprised when it was chosen as the location for the movie *Rosemary's Baby*. Each time I passed the building I had an ominous feeling and wondered what went on inside this monster building that needed an exterior cleaning. The Dakota, as most people in the world know, was where John Lennon was shot and killed on December 8, 1980. It was his residence. When the Dakota was built, the building seemed so far from what was considered the center of New York City that people said it might as well have been in the Dakota Territory, thus the name.

The west 70s in Manhattan was a convenient neighborhood for musicians and entertainers to live. We lived there because our colleagues did, just as immigrants migrated to neighborhoods and buildings where fellow countrymen took up residence. Seventy-second and Broadway was an express stop for the subway, consequently it was just minutes to Times Square. When I had the time I walked the twenty blocks to locations in the mid-50s. As you walked down 71st Street or any street in the 70s, you could hear the sound of saxophones, trumpets, pianos and other instruments coming from many apartments in the five-story brownstone buildings. Most of these buildings had two apartments on each floor in addition to two basement units. Ordinary “nine-to-fivers” lived next door to jazz or symphonic musicians and singers and actors. For example one of my neighbors was a professor at New York University. But I learned later that he was also an undercover CIA agent.

In my days at the Manhattan School of Music I continued to lead two lives: student and working musician. The big band business had begun its demise by 1950. As soon as the television sets came into living rooms, people didn’t go out during the week. Ballrooms that had operated five nights each week, were now just open on weekends—Friday, Saturday and perhaps Sunday. Eventually they operated on Saturdays only. Some clubs closed altogether which meant there weren’t that many places for bands to play. Consequently, the few bands that survived worked out of New York, mostly weekends only. Occasionally these bands had something during the week, but most of the work was Thursday through Sunday.

In my opinion there was another reason contributing to this decline. Jazz at the Philharmonic, a traveling group of musicians organized by Norman Granz, attracted listeners who were also dancers into the concert hall. At times these shows included Charlie Parker, Buddy Rich, Oscar Peterson, and other legends. Dancers who had gathered in front of ballroom band stands to listen between dances found that the music was becoming more complex, and to some uninviting for dancing, due to the influence of be bop. And as the development of jazz moved to be bop the concert hall, rather than the ballroom and bandstand, became a major venue for big band music (and small groups too). Now one-time dancers sat in concert halls, a formal way of listening that made ballrooms and



jazz clubs less popular. So, with entertainment via television in the living room and fewer ballrooms to frequent, the big bands became almost obsolete.

Saxophonist Boyd Raeburn (1913-1966) was perhaps the first big band to play what was called progressive jazz. Raeburn had his first band while at the University of Chicago about 1940. (Les Brown's band had its beginning at Duke University.) In the early 1940s Raeburn formed a traveling band with arrangements by George Handy. Musicians loved the band however some members of the dancing and listening public had difficulty understanding the music. Dancers liked Count Basie, Benny Goodman and Woody Herman, but Raeburn's band, with occasional unfamiliar harmonies and frequent dissonances probably bothered some people. Raeburn had the typical big band instrumentation as mentioned in the preface.

Claude Thornhill had a wonderful band in the 1940s with Gil Evans and a young Gerry Mulligan as arrangers. Thornhill's band was among the first big bands that reflected the be bop movement. (Some of the arrangements were precursors to the sound that Miles Davis had on the *Birth of the Cool* album a few years later.) Thornhill was among the first and few to use a French horn as part of the band's instrumentation. I always thought of Thornhill as the Brahms of the big bands. The arrangements were never frantic, but were always subdued and mellow, like Brahms. *Snowfall*, Claude Thornhill's composition and theme song is unmistakable Thornhill.

The *Birth of the Cool* album was a compilation of individual recordings that were originally recorded in 1949. This wonderful music was conceived and rehearsed in Gil Evans' apartment on 55th Street in Manhattan and Miles Davis became the leader by default. The trombonist on the gig at the Royal Roost, where this nonet made its debut was Mike Zwerin. When I moved to New York City I met Mike, who was living in an apartment building on West 71st Street where I stayed with a friend until I found my own pad. After a few years Mike moved to Paris and became a respected journalist specializing in reviews of and essays about jazz performers. (The first time I heard a recording of the Miles Davis nonet was while driving to class at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music in 1949 and listening to WNOP. The sound of *Boplicity* and *Jeru* was unlike anything I had heard before. As soon as I reached the conservatory I

sought out Phil Sunkel to tell him about these marvelous recordings with a completely different sound.)

Stan Kenton also played progressive jazz, but it was easier for non musicians to comprehend. Kenton expanded the instrumentation to five trumpets, five trombones, five saxophones and four rhythm instruments, including guitar. Kenton continued to play for dancers but began to perform more often in concert halls. There were times when he enlarged the orchestra to include one or two French horns, tuba and two or three mellophones. (The latter had a sound that was a cross between a French horn and a flugelhorn and is usually associated with military and marching bands.) Kenton always had good bands but his music became progressively less palatable to the general public.

In the 1960s commercial television entertainment was directed to an approximate twelve-year-old mentality, and that age level has decreased since then. The development of jazz moved onto free style, producing ever more complex type of improvisation difficult for many listeners to comprehend, and the jazz audience continued to decrease. At the same time the Beatles, Elvis and others came on the scene. The first time I saw Elvis Presley on the Ed Sullivan Show it was something akin to looking into a crystal ball: I knew what was coming and jazz and big band music was not included. The dumbing down of our society affected potential jazz listeners. Fewer people wanted to listen in a way that required some intellectual comprehension.

The band business continued to decline and was reduced to weekend work with an occasional mid-week engagement. During my time at the Manhattan School and later, I worked with many different bands including Les Elgart and Ralph Flannigan. I even worked with the “tick-tock” orchestra led by Tommy Tucker, who at that point was in his 60s but had a commercial name that people of a certain age recognized (on broadcasts it was “Tommy Tucker Time”). I also played one weekend with Boyd Raeburn who came out of retirement.

In addition, I returned to work for Elliot Lawrence for an extended time and also played for about nine months with the Sauter-Finegan band co-lead by Eddie Sauter and Bill Finegan. Both Eddie and Bill had arranged for the good bands from the 1940s, including Benny



Goodman, Glenn Miller and Boyd Rayburn. The Sauter-Finegan band recorded a few albums, but didn't record while I was with them. This was one of the most rewarding musical experiences I ever had because both the musicians and the arrangements were wonderful. The Sauter-Finegan band had musical arrangements for dancing. But there were a number of concert-type arrangements that audiences would eagerly stand in front of the bandstand to hear.

One of the concert pieces was an arrangement of a portion of Prokofiev's *Lt. Kije Suite* called *Sleigh Ride*, a tune now familiar as the background music for a Christmas-time Budweiser TV commercial. To mimic the sound of horses hooves Eddie Sauter stood close to the microphone and thumped his chest in a rhythmic pattern. On one occasion, toward the end of the evening, we played a section of the Liebermann *Concerto for Jazz Orchestra* (that I had never played) that the band had recorded with the Chicago Symphony under Fritz Reiner. The audience was somewhat perplexed by sounds and irregular rhythms that neither compelled them to dance nor snap their fingers.

One of the best things about playing trombone with Sauter-Finegan was the lead trombone parts had all the solos, ballad and jazz solos, which was very unusual for any band. In most bands the jazz trombone solos went to the second trombonist. When asked which bands I enjoyed playing with most, with no hesitation I say Woody Herman and the Sauter-Finegan bands.

During my time with the Sauter-Finegan band John Perras was in the saxophone section. John doubled as a flute player and later joined the Toronto Symphony as a flutist. Later still he became the conductor for the Paul Taylor Dance Company. From Toronto John sent me a personalized Christmas card in 1957 created by an artist-friend. Framed, it hangs in my home. Each branch of a minimalist tree has a symbolic wish. Peace, "MG," "1" and "?". Peace is self explanatory, the "MG" stands for the car I drove at the time (John also had an MG), the "1" symbolized the principle or 1st trombone chair that I held in San Antonio, and the "?" was for whatever I wanted.

Living the life of a jazz musician, I have often been asked how did you avoid and survive the prevalence of drugs and drinking. I drink socially and have wine or beer with my evening meal. A drink that consisted of layers of liquors that made me ill at age sixteen

convinced me that drinking as a sport was stupid. It happened at the Venetian bar on Colerain Avenue near my uncle's previously-mentioned hardware store.

Some of the musicians I worked with were junkies, pot heads and alcoholics. A trumpet player and roommate for a while with one of the bands I traveled with kept a bottle of booze by his bed. Upon opening his eyes each morning he reached for the bottle; his next move was to light a cigarette. Before the gig that night the bottle was empty. Nevertheless, he always played well and there was no indication that he was an alcoholic. But, too often jazz musicians are pigeonholed as heavy drinkers and dopers with foul mouths, minimum education, who lacked awareness of the world in which they functioned. Some of the brightest people I met were musicians who drank socially, or not at all. They didn't use drugs, had extensive vocabularies with no need to use profanity, were extremely intelligent—and were aware of what was happening in the world. Drugs are most often associated with jazz and pop musicians, nevertheless, there are classical musicians, minority that they might be, who also indulge.

Charlie Parker's heroin addiction was addressed in "Bird," the film version of the life of the musical genius. In the film (and in real life) Red Rodney, a young trumpet player who joined Bird's quintet, decided he could, like Bird, play even better if he used heroin. When Bird discovered this he was angry and told Rodney it was a mistake to assume it would help his improvising. Charlie Parker died because of his drug use; Red Rodney was able to rid himself of the demon and was clean for the latter part of his life.

In New York City when I found the time I went to hear some of my favorite jazz players who performed at the Five Spot and the Half Note. Al Cohn and Zoot Sims appeared at the latter club every three or four months. During their two or three week engagements I took the subway downtown at least once to hear the perfect twosome accompanied by a rhythm section. These two inventive players complemented each other. Zoot had a happy bouncy style while his bookend partner, Al Cohn, made his musical statements in a darker, moaning-like style.

Zoot always had a drink nearby and when he finished one, without looking down he dropped the glass from the bandstand high above



the bar at the Half Note. The bartender was always there to catch the glass. It was a ritual that many knew about and expected. Al Cohn also downed a few. I heard a story that in Copenhagen someone asked if Al had tried the Elephant beer. Al replied, "No, man, I drink to forget." Al was in Charlie's Tavern and mentioned that he just finished an album with 24 mandolin players. Someone asked, "Where did they find that many mandolin players?" "Well," said Al, "All day today you couldn't get a haircut in Jersey City."<sup>2</sup> On another occasion a bartender asked Al "What'll you have?" Al replied, "One too many."<sup>3</sup> Zoot Sims was never at a loss for words. When a fan asked how he could play so well when he was loaded, Zoot replied, "I practice when I'm loaded."<sup>4</sup>

At the end of an evening at the Five Spot where Al and Zoot were playing, Zoot remained on the bandstand. Al was at the bar, Mousie Alexander had already packed up his drums, and the bass and piano players were about to leave. Zoot continued to play, alone. From the bar (and in reference to the movie about an obsessive dancer) Al wryly said, "Zoot, take off the red shoes."<sup>5</sup>

In 1956, the year after I moved to New York, Dizzy Gillespie had just returned from a State Department tour through the mid-East where he fronted a big band specially assembled for this tour to all those countries now in disarray. Dizzy took this fantastic big band into Birdland. It included Blue Mitchell or Lee Morgan and Quincy Jones in the trumpet section and Charlie Persip may have been the drummer. The band also recorded soon after the tour. That band was so good, so fantastic, and so cohesively tight, I was told they recorded every arrangement in one or two takes. (One night at Birdland Woody Herman was in the audience and we chatted for a while. Birdland closed a few years latter.)<sup>6</sup>

The doorman and announcer at Birdland was Pee Wee Marquette, a black midget. Before each nightly set of music he would introduce the musicians. If you were not a "star" he would ask for \$2 each week to announce your name. Some musicians complied and others ignored him. When he made the announcements he would go through his routine mentioning the well-known musicians, then with a pained voice he would say "and others."

Years later, after Birdland had closed, Pee Wee took his doorman stance at the nearby Hawaii Kai restaurant. Musician Johnny Morris

passed the restaurant and greeted Pee Wee, who didn't seem to recognize him. "Pee Wee, don't you recognize me? I used to give you \$2 every week to say my name correctly." Pee Wee said, "Give me \$2 and maybe I'll remember."

Musicians used personal jazz lingo among themselves. But, just as one moves to a different language depending on the company, most of us spoke normally with non-musicians. Profanity used in moments of excitement and anger is difficult to censor on the spot. The use of the wrong word in the midst of a conservative audience can make for an awkward situation. However, the unintentional use of be bop parlance in a similar setting can be laughed off or explained if necessary.

Perhaps this is the place to state my personal theory about musical backgrounds. In my opinion many musicians who have an interest in jazz before or while studying classical music become better interpreters of the latter. The ability to improvise can be nurtured but seldom taught. Likewise, after years of strict classical instruction it is difficult, even impossible for some musicians to "loosen up" and take liberties with what is written—liberties that jazz musicians take without thinking about it. Sequential eighth notes are most often played in a rhythm that somewhat resembles dotted eighth and sixteenth notes. With no exposure or intuitive feeling for jazz, many classical musicians have trouble with this.

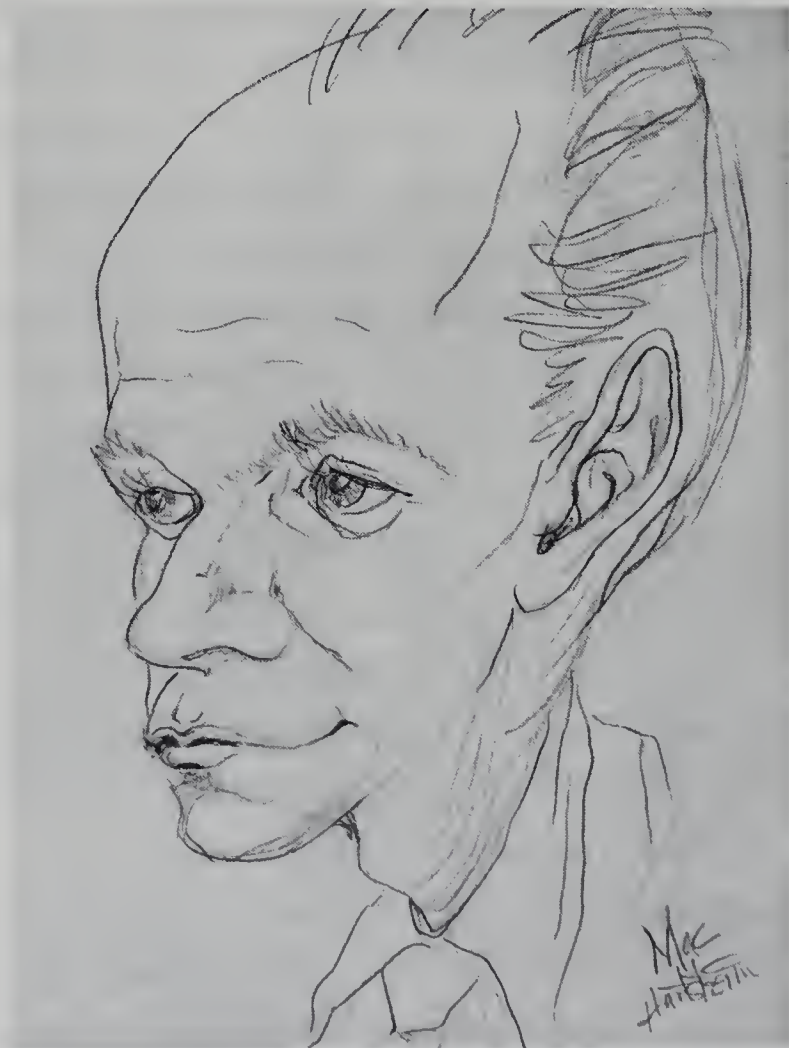
This rigidity is beginning to disappear among many classical players. Louis Armstrong said, "any learned musician can read music, but they all can't swing." It is now common for musicians with jazz backgrounds to become members of symphony orchestras, and some of what they bring rubs off on their colleagues. Jazz and pop musicians now perform with the "Pops" orchestras of major symphonies. Consequently, some symphony orchestras do an adequate job of "swinging" when required; however, some are still unable to "loosen up." But, as I said, things are changing.

To extend these comparisons and differences, the influence of jazz on classical composers should be of interest. For centuries composers of concert and church music followed the European tradition of classical composition. Eventually Stravinsky (1882-1971), some of the impressionist composers like Ravel, and others including Darius Milhaud, American composers Copland



and Bernstein, began to write music that was influenced by jazz. Some classical composers had followed their own muses, and many continue in this tradition and for them jazz is not an acceptable art form. Then, in the 1920s came George Gershwin, composer of popular songs who also wrote classical music that was influenced by jazz. Now, concert reviews, descriptions in concert programs and CD liner notes about particular compositions are replete with references to jazz influences that demonstrate cross pollination. But, as I said, things are changing. It was Fats Waller who said, "If you got to ask what [swing] is, you ain't go it."

In 1957 I received my master's degree in musicology from the Manhattan School of Music. Luther Dittmer, my advisor, told me of musicology teaching openings to cover one-year sabbaticals at the Universities of Tennessee and Wisconsin. One-year appointments usually lead to extensions or other appointments—an entrée to college teaching. Professor Dittmer was ready and eager to write letters of recommendation for me. But I decided to continue performing—another example of how my life might have gone in a different direction had one of these positions become available to me.



**A caricature of me by Mack Hartstein.**

## **Chapter VII**

### **San Antonio**

**1957-1959**

I RECEIVED THE break I needed in my job search from Simon Karasic, a trombonist and teacher who rehearsed a brass ensemble on Thursday of each week in lower Manhattan, an ensemble I played with while attending the Manhattan School of Music. I told Simon about the unsuccessful audition for the Denver Symphony position. He told me of an opening for principal trombone in the San Antonio Symphony, and added that the conductor, Victor Allesandro, a friend of Karasic's, did not want to come to New York to audition trombonists. Instead, Allesandro asked Karasic to recommend someone for the position. He recommended me, and I was hired through that recommendation, without auditioning. (I spent two years in San Antonio, but I returned to New York between seasons.) In the summer of 1957, after graduating from the Manhattan School of Music I returned to Cincinnati briefly and purchased a green 1953 MG and drove it to San Antonio. I had played there with Elliot Lawrence in 1950, consequently, the downtown section was familiar to me. A Mexican-American family rented a three-room cottage to me; it was behind their lovely house in a neighborhood about 20 minutes from the concert hall where the orchestra played weekly concerts. I most often drove my 1953 MG with the top down beneath the Texas blue sky.

Unlike New York City I enjoyed being able to drive anywhere and park almost anywhere. I felt very much at home in San Antonio. As everyone does when living in a different ethnically influenced environment, I investigated Mexican food and purchased "things" for my dwelling that reflected the Mexican influence so prevalent in San Antonio. I dated a few women but am glad I didn't become involved to the point of marriage. That would have altered my life and might have kept me from returning to New York.

The symphony season in San Antonio was only twenty-six weeks in length. We rehearsed in late afternoons or early evenings. Many of the musicians had found a niche and lived permanently in San Antonio with a secondary job; a few taught school. The younger musicians like me, left San Antonio at the end of the season to return



for the next season and considered the orchestra as a springboard to a position with a major orchestra. The San Antonio orchestra was excellent and I immediately established a good relationship with Victor Allesandro, the conductor. The other two trombonists in the orchestra were Fred Braverman and bass trombonist, Bob Dockstader. Major soloists and guest conductors performed almost weekly. Many of the programs included pieces I hadn't played before. Playing with the orchestra was good experience for what was to come a few years later.

As principle trombonist I could have sought some students but didn't; a few came to me. While I was working on my master's degree at the Manhattan School (1955-1957) I taught in its Preparatory Division. If the students demonstrated talent it was a pleasure to offer assistance and help them. If not, it was a chore.

What I did enjoy was playing classical duets with Charlie Loper in San Antonio. Charlie who was in the Air Force and stationed in San Antonio called one day to introduce himself and asked if I was interested in playing duets. We got together on a regular basis and had some good sessions. Charlie came to New York a few years later where we met once again. However, "The Apple" was not the city for Charlie. After a month or two he went to Las Vegas for six years and then to Los Angeles where he remains one of the most visible trombonists recording movie sound tracks, mostly.

I also resumed my study of German and found a teacher in San Antonio. To gain more fluency with German I wrote my weekly letters from San Antonio to my parents in German. My mother, who had spoken German as a child remembered enough to decipher what I wrote.

I met a few people through members of the orchestra and others that I became acquainted with on my own. Consequently, I had a social life, at least one that was sufficient for me. Laredo, the border town with Mexico was only about 150 miles away. Bill Gaffney, an oboist in the orchestra and I drove across the border into Mexico a few times where good quality tequila was available for about one dollar (a few dollars purchased outstanding tequila). At the end of the first season in San Antonio I had a party for some friends in the orchestra. I served tequila punch from a recipe that I had been given. It pleased everyone.

I drove to Cincinnati at the end of the season, left my MG in the care of my father and flew to New York. It was the summer after my first season in San Antonio that I worked with Richard Maltby. Dick had a good band with a hit record, the theme from the Frank Sinatra movie, the *Man with the Golden Arm*. We worked all that summer including a trip that took us out as far as Denver and Boulder, where we played at the University of Colorado. It was at that time that Elvis Presley was getting a lot of attention and the jazz musicians in this band could not understand what all the fuss was about.

Before the tour, Dick had five or six arrangers create their individual version of *When the Saints Go Marchin' In*. These writers included Jimmy Giuffre (one of the *Four Brothers* on the Woody Herman recording), Rusty Dedrich and Gunther Schuller, French hornist and composer who later became the director of the New England Conservatory of Music. We performed these variations a few times during the tour. Most of the variations were too sophisticated and cerebral for the audiences, especially the Gunther Schuller and Jimmy Giuffre versions. After we played all the different versions of the "*Saints*" the band went into a traditional improvised Dixieland version, and that simplified rendition received the most applause. Dick Maltby's investment in multiple arrangements of the Dixieland anthem was a waste of money.

Dick's band passed through Cincinnati after playing in Kentucky on our way to Chicago. I had called ahead and the three musicians traveling with me in our car stopped for breakfast. At that time, margarine as the substitute for butter was not very tasty. I would not eat it and in restaurants I would always ask if they served margarine or butter, so I wouldn't be disappointed. The other three musicians with me always made fun of me because of my dislike for margarine. We arrived at my parent's place about 6:00 a.m. after driving through the night. We sat down for breakfast and my mother fixed scrambled eggs. I took one bite of toast and said "this is margarine!" The guys almost fell on the floor with laughter. My mother didn't have butter in the house and forgot about my preference, so I ate dry toast. My three musician friends reminded me of that incident many times over subsequent years.

When playing one-nighters with any band and the next location wasn't too far, 100-150 miles, it made sense to drive to the next



city immediately after the gig. By the time you finished the job, which usually was at 1:00 a.m., packed your instrument, and had something to eat, it would be about 2:30. We drove to the next city and would arrive there at maybe 5:00 or 6:00 a.m. We checked into the reserved hotel, slept until noon, then spent a leisurely afternoon and returned to the same room when we finished the job that night. This was a way of getting two night's rest for the cost of one. We did this once every week or two. If the distance was 300 miles to the next location it meant getting up earlier than we wanted. I think there was a union rule that limited travel to 300 miles in one day, but that rule was stretched at times.

On Saturday nights when we immediately traveled to the next location, I always asked at the hotel if there was a Catholic Church nearby and the times for mass. I attended a lot of early Sunday masses at 4:00, 5:00 or 6:00 a.m. People who attended these masses had just left work or were beginning their day. They were bakers, newspaper employees and others who worked odd hours. Years later when I was living and working in New York I often attended mass at St. Malachy's, the actor's chapel on 49th St. between Broadway and 8th Avenue. There was a Sunday mass at 12:05 a.m. and it was attended primarily by Broadway actors and musicians.

In that summer of 1958 between the first and second season in San Antonio Richard Maltby did something very nice for me. A weekly program at NBC showcased a different name band each week, a band working in New York or the vicinity. This weekly show aired at 10:00 a.m., as I remember. In the mid-50's, as I have said previously, the band business was dying, so this radio program continued with NBC staff musicians conducted by Skitch Henderson with an occasional guest band leader. For one week Richard Maltby was the guest conductor.

The Maltby band wasn't working during the early part of that week, just on the weekend. So Dick arranged for me to come to NBC during that week to be featured during one of the radio broadcasts. He had written a beautiful arrangement of an original tune, *Indian Serenade*, which he composed and arranged for me, and we played it nightly on the road. It was nice for the ego to be featured with a band of NBC musicians. I still don't know why I didn't alert somebody to tape record that broadcast.

During that summer, when not traveling, I was living on West 71st Street near Central Park West. I shared a garden (basement) apartment with Ralph Ferraro, drummer and arranger, who had been in the Navy with my brother, Jack. Ralph married Manuelitta, a childhood sweetheart from Connecticut and moved to Italy where he became “the” drummer for the recording industry in Rome, including films. Years later, after writing a few film scores, Ralph moved to Los Angeles and scored film music. He received credit for some, but most of his work was as a “ghost” orchestrator for other composers including Quincy Jones, Leonard Rosenman, Randy Edleman and others who had more assignments than they could handle. After an arrangement was sketched by the composer with indications of style, instrumentation and effect, ghost arrangers completed the film scores.

Other musicians stayed with Ralph and me for varying lengths of time, including trombonist and arranger Don Sebesky. Don Trenner, a pianist from Los Angeles also lived with us for a while. Don introduced me to Paul Desmond who was performing at Basin Street, a club in New York City. Paul had a dry sense of humor. When rushed to the hospital with a heart attack he was asked if he was allergic to anything. “Country and Western music” was his response.

I returned to San Antonio in the fall of 1958 and lived in a big house owned by a woman who was a caterer. Her grown son was away more than he was at home, which meant that even though I rented a very large bedroom, I had access to other parts of the house and often had the house to myself. This big two-story house was about ten minutes away from the concert hall. As I did at the end of the previous season, I had a party for select friends in the orchestra; all were impressed with the house where I stayed.

During that second season, more outstanding soloists appeared with the orchestra including Elisabeth Schwartzkopf, Eileen Farrell, George London and many, many others. (At the end of each season there was a two-week opera season in San Antonio. Most of the singers had sung at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City.) We also had some guest conductors including Howard Hanson, one of the conductors that I most enjoyed playing under. Mexican composer Carlos Chavez conducted a program that included one of his compositions that was replete with native Mexican dance



rhythms. During a rehearsal of his piece, he stopped the orchestra and said “caliente, caliente” to me, meaning the solo I had should be hot, or jazz-like. I knew exactly what he wanted.

The San Antonio Symphony made some brief tours in Texas and one in Mexico, where we went as far south as Monterey. On the second or third day in Mexico, about six members became ill from drinking the water. At the end of the first movement of the Brahms Fourth Symphony two violinists ran from the stage. At the end of the second movement three more musicians left abruptly. By the end of the fourth movement the orchestra was smaller in size.

Before I returned to New York at the end of that second season in San Antonio I decided to drive my 1953 MG to California. I had friends in Los Angeles that I had met in the service and from the time I traveled with Elliot Lawrence and other bands. One of these friends was Eddie Grady, with whom I had worked in New York. His band was known as Eddie Grady and the Commanders. The band was only active for a few years and made some successful recordings. Eddie, a drummer, used an unusual instrumentation: the four trombones sat in the front row and the two saxophones and three trumpets were behind. It was demanding for the trombones because we played most of the time with few musical rests.

In Los Angeles I called Eddie to say hello and he said he could offer me some work if I stayed. Over the next few days I also phoned a few other people that I knew to tell them I was in town. I then drove to the musician’s union to submit my transfer. I arrived minutes too late on Friday; the offices were closed. Over the weekend I changed my mind and drove to Cincinnati for a few days before returning to New York City.

The San Antonio Symphony season had ended in March or April, so I returned to New York in May. I had signed a contract to return to San Antonio for a third season but changed my mind when I returned to New York. For a penalty fee I was allowed to break my contract.

## Chapter VIII

### Back in the Big Apple

1959

A second-grader told her musician father that she knew who Louis Armstrong was. "OK, who was he," he asked? Her reply, "He was the first man in space." Most jazz musicians would not disagree.

MY FIRST GIG on my return to New York was quite a contrast to what I had been doing with the San Antonio Symphony. Buddy Rich was about to take a band into the Apollo Theater in Harlem; I was hired for the gig. Dan Terry was the contractor who hired the musicians for Buddy. Dan, a trumpet player and copyist worked at home when he copied arrangements for different bands. He also had a rehearsal band that played good arrangements, second copies of those Dan had copied for other bands. I had previously rehearsed with Dan's band and even though I had been away from New York for the symphony season—out of sight, out of mind—he hired me for the Buddy Rich gig.

In those days all jazz musicians felt comfortable in Harlem; the instrument cases we carried identified us and became our safe passports. Buddy had a fantastic band that included trombonists Eddie Bert and Benny Morton, who was up in years at that point; Benny played trombone with Count Basie in the 30's, as did saxophonist Earl Warren,<sup>1</sup> who was also on the gig. Phil Woods, Charlie Rouse, a tenor player who recorded with Thelonious Monk, were also in the sax section. John Bunch was the pianist and Philly Joe Jones was the extra drummer, who played with the band when we accompanied Nina Simone and Al Hibbler, the latter was the legendary blind black singer who sang with the Duke Ellington band for many years. Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers were also part of the show. Buddy Rich just played the band arrangements, which featured him. We did four shows a day for a week and it was a joy. It was not only a pleasure to play with Buddy's band, it was a joy to listen to Art Blakey's group every day.

During one of the shows Buddy added an arrangement and during the drum solo that Philly Joe Jones was playing, Buddy kept motioning



for him to extend the solo. This went on and on and on and Philly Joe was perspiring and tiring and pleaded to get back to the arrangement. Ultimately we did, but Buddy thought this was funny.

In 1959, years before people spent their money trying to win one of the many state lotteries, people illegally played numbers. The “numbers guy” who worked that section of Harlem came by the Apollo Theater each day. He had a little black book in which he recorded the bets, all in code. One could bet any amount, as little as ten cents. I picked three numbers and gave the guy 25 cents a few times, but I never won. As I remember the daily winning three numbers were decided by the winning positions of horses in the first three races at a designated race track.

Buddy Rich had a reputation for being acerbic, unforgiving and justifiably had an enormous ego. However, since the band consisted of seasoned musicians, he was on his good behavior at the Apollo. While on the road one of Buddy’s musicians surreptitiously recorded one of Buddy’s tirades on a small tape recorder. This tape was copied and circulates today. There are many stories about Buddy. Howard Hirsch, drummer and percussionist, became friends with Buddy and one day wound up on the same record date. Howard asked Buddy how he felt about percussionists. Buddy replied, “I lay down the road for them to walk on.” A few years later Howard had a gig at the Waldorf Astoria. Dressed in his tuxedo and carrying his drum set, he waited for the elevator. The door opened and there was Buddy Rich in his tuxedo with his drum set. Howard said, “Buddy, the only similarity between you and me is the drum set. Other than that you are the master....” Buddy grabbed Howard, hugged him, and said, “Howard, you got that right!” For years Buddy Rich had asked Buddy Childers, one-time lead trumpet player for Stan Kenton, to join his band. When asked why he always refused, Buddy Childers said that they had been friends for years, why spoil it. Rich laughed and agreed that they should remain as friends, only.

The Apollo was known for its Wednesday Amateur Contest. (Sarah Vaughn and Ella Fitzgerald and others were discovered at one of these Wednesday contests.) The audience was always extremely critical. If they didn’t like the performer and verbally made their feeling known, a guy in long underwear came on stage and did a dance as the band played Jimmie Lunceford’s *For Dancers Only*, the

signal for the amateur to leave the stage—quickly. Jimmie Lunceford had a wonderful band in the 1940s and the mention of his name here reminds me of the joke about two musicians meeting on the street and one asked the other who he was working with at the time. The musician said that he was working with Jimmie Lunceford. The questioning musician said that Lunceford had died about a year ago. Staring into space the other musician said “no wonder we haven’t been getting any gigs.”

During the week at the Apollo, smack dab in the middle of Harlem on 125th Street, there was not much to do between shows so, we hung around the dressing room, played cards, and talked to each other. Some outside musicians came backstage to see some of the guys in the band. Shadow Wilson, a black drummer who was very active in the 1940s, was one of the visitors. He had played with Georgie Auld, a saxophone player who had a marvelous band in the late 1940s. His band was often called the white Count Basie band, because the band was so similar in style. Shadow Wilson came backstage at the theater, eager just to talk to any of the musicians. I enjoyed chatting with him because he was a marvelous drummer. He was in bad physical condition at the time and died about six months later.

At the time of the Apollo gig I was living on Claremont Avenue, just a few blocks from 125th Street and Broadway, consequently I walked to and from the Apollo, which was about eight blocks further east. Later when I lived further downtown and went to the Apollo Theater as a patron I took the subway—and yes, I took the “A Train.”

Claremont Avenue ran parallel to Broadway at about 120th Street, just down the street from the Juilliard School of Music. When the Juilliard School moved into its new building in Lincoln Center in 1969, the Manhattan School of Music occupied the old Juilliard building at 120 Claremont a building designed by the Empire State Building’s architects in 1931. (It’s unfortunate that I didn’t live on Claremont when I went to school, I could have just walked up the street instead of having to go across town

I often walked past the construction site that would become Lincoln Center. It didn’t occur to me that a few years later when Symphony Hall, later Avery Fisher Hall and the City Center Ballet buildings were completed I would perform in both. The Lincoln Center site changed



the neighborhood. Arnie Fromme, a trombonist-friend (whom I replaced in the San Antonio Symphony) lived just a few doors away from Thelonious Monk. Both of them and all the other occupants who lived in the low 60s on the west side of Broadway were required to move so Lincoln Center could occupy their former streets. Arnie lived on the ground level of a typical New York brownstone building. In the summer when we played trombone quartets in his living room that faced the street, music that was sent through the open windows drew kids from the street as they crowded around the open window to listen.

One night during the week at the Apollo I was the last to leave the theater. The stage entrance and exit was in the rear of the theater and at 11:00 p.m. the side street was deserted and in near total darkness. As I turned the corner to get to 125th Street I heard a voice before I saw her. A lady of the evening was standing in a doorway across the street. She recognized my instrument case and called to me saying "Hey! Mister Hornblower." I smiled and kept walking.

Another of my lasting memories from the Apollo days is what I call the "whoo" factor, a high-pitched, loud call of enthusiasm for a moving musical performance by Aretha Franklin, Sarah Vaughn, Sam Cook, Billy Eckstine and others. This is now an irritatingly prevalent practice but it began among African-Americans who went to the Apollo and similar places that featured performers like those just mentioned. I remember being part of predominantly black audiences in the 1950s and 1960s when a performer, especially a singer, would reach the audience in such a way that someone would moan and say something like "sing your song." This usually happened at the Apollo Theater when I was there as a patron or performer. This statement of approval was at times accompanied by a soulful "whoo," which might then be followed by a partial echo of the statement from another patron in a different part of the club or theater. The initial self-appointed critic made the statement for the entire audience; this and the response was sufficient and everyone in the audience understood this. But most white "rocker" audiences hijacked this practice and abused what had been a hip statement within the black community. Now just about everyone receives a standing ovation, and just about everyone screams "whoo," including people at classical music concerts. The "follow-the-crowd-people"

seem to think they are required to scream “whoo”, which has become part of the performance by unwanted audience participation. Like a Pavlovian response, “whoo” is now heard whenever a television camera or microphone is directed at a group of people.

Fifteen blocks to the north of the Apollo at Lenox Avenue was the location of the legendary Savoy Ballroom, known as the “Home of Happy Feet,” where Chick Webb was the house band from 1931-1939. The Lindy Hop, or Lindy, what Midwesterners called the Jitterbug, originated at the Savoy. This shrine for big band jazz opened in 1927 and closed in 1958; unfortunately, I never experienced the ambience of the Savoy. The Ken Burns television show about the history of jazz presented a snapshot of what went on at the Savoy. Most often a second band, in addition to Chick Webb, heated up the ballroom for the dancers. Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Earl Hines and other bands alternated sets with the house band and then the dancers decided which band was the best. From what I have read and heard, Chick Webb was the winner most of the time. The monstrous Savoy held 4000 people and how I wish I could have heard Chick Webb and his singer, Ella Fitzgerald, compete with Jay McShan, Lionel Hampton or some other band as the best Lindy Hoppers in the world burned up the dance floor until 4:00 a.m.

Another New York job source came when I became reacquainted with Mort Hillman, a trumpet player from Cincinnati who had moved to New York a few years before I did. He discarded his trumpet and became affiliated with a record company as an A&R (Artist & Repertoire) man and was helpful in having me hired for some recordings. These included an album for Larry Kurt, the male lead in the original Broadway production of *West Side Story*, a comedy album with Allen King, that required incidental music, and albums for other singers. Mort Hillman’s contractor hired me as part of small band that backed up a rock and roll group, the name of which I immediately forgot. Some of the names of these groups spawned this joke. As an A&R man walked passed a studio he asked who was in the occupied studio. The studio was being painted and the response was “the painters are in there.” The A&R man became excited and said he had never heard of that group.

Night clubs, another place for musicians to make a living, are notorious for not respecting musicians. The Latin Quarter and the



Copacabana were no exceptions. It was always necessary to enter the club through the kitchen and then go to a changing area that we shared with the waiters. The rooms were always too small and most waiters seemed to lack respect for musicians, including the great Bill Evans, who was tall and always sat farther back from the piano keyboard than most pianists. I heard him say that while he was playing a ballad at the Village Vanguard, a jazz club in New York City, he leaned back before playing the next phrase and a waiter on the way to the kitchen walked between Bill and the keyboard.

One of the many night club gigs I did included a week or two with a band that backed up Harry Belafonte at a club in Brooklyn. I was living on 71st Street, again, so getting to this job involved a subway ride to Brooklyn that took at least 40 minutes followed by another twenty minutes on a bus and then a ten minute walk to the club. When this trip was reversed I arrived home at about 3:30 a.m., or later. On the last night, to show his appreciation, Harry gave each of us something and then we drew numbers for a bottle of champagne and I won. So, at 2:30 a.m., carrying my instrument, a bag with mutes, a gift and a bottle of champagne I made the trip to 71st St. trying to stay awake on the subway. At that time of the morning buses and subways didn't run very often, so the return trip always took longer.

In his performances Harry Belafonte included folk songs from different cultures. In and around New York City, Miami and one or two other cities with a Jewish awareness, *Hava Nagila* was a familiar tune. However, elsewhere, especially in the midwest, audiences were introduced to this joyous Jewish song and dance by Belafonte. Without knowing the origin, even some anti-Semitic audiences liked it and were caught up in the excitement of the music.

In New York City I also worked at an amusement park called Freedomland in the Baychester section of the Bronx, north of New York City. Covering 205 acres, it was probably the largest amusement park at the time. It had exhibits and rides that captured the pioneer days to the space age. Name bands played in the dance pavilion; I played there for a week with Richard Maltby. The park with the Americana decor didn't generate enough interest and closed after four years in 1964.

At this time I participated in some concerts with my friend John

Perras, a flutist, who organized the Dorian Woodwind Quintet in 1961. John was a friend of composer and French horn player Dave Amram, whom I knew from the Manhattan School of Music. Seymour Wakschal and a few other musicians whose names I forgot were part of a small circle of musicians that included John and Dave. We listened to music and spent time at the Carnegie Tavern after performances. Dave was being recognized and his music was being played by orchestras and chamber groups in New York that always included Seymour, an extraordinary violinist who could play with sensitivity and attack virtuoso pieces demonically. A few years later Seymour became a member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, for a brief time assistant concert master. Twenty years later I picked up the *New York Times* on April 6, 1983 to see: "Violinist Arrested on Drug Charges." It was Seymour Wakschal. This was not good press for the Met.

It was probably in the early 1960s when, with other New York musicians, I performed in Brattleboro, Vermont. Blanche Honegger Moyse, sister of Swiss cellist Henri Honegger and daughter-in-law of French flutist Marcel Moyse, came to the U.S. and settled in Vermont in 1949 and organized the Brattleboro Music Center. The only thing I remember about this concert was that it included the Saint-Saëns Third Symphony, called the Organ Symphony because of the dynamic use of this instrument in the final movement.

In the 1960s I continued to do general free-lance work. I met Bob Swan, timpanist and contractor, the one who hired the musicians at the Radio City Music Hall. I attended a concert at Town Hall and a musician friend introduced me to Bob. He had friends in the San Antonio Symphony and we chatted about mutual friends. He said I should come to the Hall for a discussion. I did, and the very next week he called me to substitute for one of the trombonists. There were four shows a day, every day except for the week before Christmas when we played five daily shows. It was a five-day work week, so every musician in the orchestra had two days off, which meant substitutes covered the sixth and seventh day. Some of the trombonists at the Hall at different times when I was there include Bill Motzing, Dave Jett, Bob Norden, Rod Levitt, Per Brevig, Jim Pugh and bass trombonists Dick Hixon, Dick Lieb (also a marvelous arranger), Dean Plank and Don Wittekind.



As contractor at the Radio City Music Hall, Bob Swan was in his office between each of the four daily shows. Although the orchestra was larger when the theater opened in 1932, when I worked there the orchestra consisted of about 40 musicians, each with different days off. In addition, vacations, illness and time off for other reasons kept Bob busy calling musicians to cover these vacancies. One day Bob was required to fill out a disability claim for a violinist who had been poked in the eye by his partner's bow. One question on the claim form asked, "What has the patient done to avoid a repeat occurrence of this accident?" Bob wrote "The violinist will play pizzicato."

At the Radio City Music Hall, I became reacquainted with Dave Jett, a trombonist from Cincinnati. Before I left Cincinnati, my first night with the previously mentioned Al Cassidy's band was Dave's last night. Dave joined the Kansas City Symphony, but after a few years went to New York and became the first trombonist in the Radio City Music Hall Orchestra.

Dave belongs in the *Guinness Book of Records* for playing the trombone solo in Ravel's *Bolero* more times than any trombonist on earth. The *Bolero* is programmed every six to nine years in most symphony orchestras, and this is enough for most trombone players because the solo can be hazardous. The repeated high D flat and the glissando into this note, if not executed properly, can make a sound that resembles an animal in distress. The Music Hall programmed the *Bolero* about every five to six years. It was played four times a day, seven days each week, (five for Dave) and the show ran for an average of six to eight weeks. During Dave's time at the Music Hall he probably played the solo between 600 and 700 times.

At the Radio City Music Hall, Dick Leibert and other organists played the "mighty Wurlitzer" organ before and after every show. It was a sound that transported one to the 1930s and 1940s when theaters around the country were called movie palaces. They had beautiful thematic interior decorations and each had an organ that was heard prior to and after each movie or stage show.

During my time at the Music Hall as a substitute and later as a permanent member of the orchestra, I worked under about six conductors. Raymond Paige was the principle conductor and can be seen in a few movie musicals from the 1930s conducting an orchestra in the midst of some Busby Berkley-like extravaganza. Next in line

was Leon Zawisza. The most competent conductor was Ray Wright, originally a trombonist who became an arranger for some of the name bands. He was the principal arranger at the Music Hall and conducted for a brief period. The last conductor before the Hall closed was Paul Lavalley, the little man with a Napoleon complex. (Paul Lavalley conducted the Cities Service Concert band on radio and later the McDonald's All American Band that marched in the annual Macy's Day Parade. We called this the hamburger band.)

We played a variety of music from classical overtures to pop and standard tunes that accompanied stage performers. During a rehearsal John Dosso, one of the conductors who was classically trained with little association with pop music, called up a tune that must have been foreign to him but common to everyone else. He referred to it as *Five Foot, Two Eyes of Blue*; it was of course, *Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue*. This brought snickers from many of the musicians.

Donald Deskey designed the interior of this Art Deco theater. The design was so impressive that when the Radio City Music Hall opened a reporter noted that some said "the New Music Hall needs no performers." The distance from the stage to the rear of the theater was at least 200 feet, with a huge balcony; the stage area was 66 feet high and 140 feet wide. Seating in the theater accommodated 6,240 people. The facilities for men and women were not only spacious but elegant.

There were seven floors in the building including rehearsal rooms, huge storage areas, a floor where scenery was created, an infirmary and the Plaza Sound Recording Studio. The musicians' area was two levels below the street. Before each show we climbed aboard the pit that moved mechanically up into position near the stage.

There were two blackouts while I was living in New York and both took place when I was at the Radio City Music Hall. The first took place in November 1965 and was the subject for a movie, *Where Were You When The Night the Lights Went Out*, in which Robert Morse played the male lead. The first one happened as I was just about to enter the building for the third show. It was around 6 or 6:30 and the power went off and it was off all night until the next morning. At that time of evening, it was just dusk so it wasn't that dark and I lived only six or eight blocks away therefore had no trouble walking to my apartment. I don't remember how I functioned that night



without any lights; I guess I had candles.

The second blackout took place in 1977 on July 13, my birthday, during a show I worked at the Radio City Music Hall. This second blackout also took place during a show at the Music Hall. Everything just stopped. Everything went black. The orchestra pit, which operated electrically, was stuck just below stage level. We had to crawl over the railing and go through the audience with only a couple of emergency lights to guide us. We found our way to the back stage area and down two flights to the musician's room. It was an experience to get out of the building and meet with the other musicians for our drive to New Jersey because the city was entirely black. Concerned citizens became instant traffic cops, directing traffic with flashlights.

On Easter Sundays between the first and second shows at the Radio City Music Hall some of the musicians walked one block to 5th Avenue to watch the Easter Parade. This was a disorganized parade of people and animals, usually dogs, in outlandish hats. They walked up and down 5th Avenue near St. Patrick's Cathedral, from which traffic was diverted.

Across the street was the RCA Building with north, south, east and west entrances and a convenient place to walk through on the way to somewhere else and a way to get out of rain and snow. Soap Operas, the Today and Tonight shows and NBC news programs emanated from studios on the upper floors. I often nodded a hello to John Chancellor, the anchor for the evening NBC News; he usually entered the building about 4:30 p.m. as did Johnny Carson. Known as a shy person in public, Carson always avoided making eye contact with most people, including me. Autograph seekers hung around the 50th Street entrance to the RCA Building waiting for celebrities. Some would approach anyone who looked like a celebrity and ask, "Are you somebody?"

Musicians who worked at the Radio City Music Hall usually ate dinner between the second and third shows, about 5 or 5:30. We all had our favorite restaurants but couldn't go too far from the theater due to a time constraint. One of the musicians always seemed to find places to eat where the food was good and inexpensive. The lunchroom in *The New York Times* building was open to anyone with a union card, consequently we ate there on occasion. Our musician-

food scout discovered an entrance to the employee cafeteria at the Plaza Hotel. Until someone discovered that we were not employees, we ate there once in a while. The hotel had a few restaurants and when a particular food item was in short supply it would be sent to the employee cafeteria. Consequently, the menu changed constantly and at times the food was superb.

Another place to eat when the interval between shows was shorter was one of the Horn and Hardart Automats, a unique type of eating place that originated in Philadelphia. It also had, as I remember, at least six locations in New York City. The kitchen was behind two walls at right angles and attendants would place food in little compartments that had glass windows; you would insert the appropriate number of coins in a slot and the window opened. The food was good and inexpensive and the clientele varied from minimum wage earners to bankers. I frequently heard Yiddish and Eastern European languages spoken at adjacent tables. The writer Isaac Bashivas Singer, whose wonderful work I didn't discover until many years later, often mentioned the Automat in his stories. This was a place where displaced Jews and other Europeans met to discuss their lives and what they left behind when they came here in the late 1930s. I could have sat near Mr. Singer but wouldn't have known it at the time. One of the last Automats to close was between 5th and Park Avenues on 46th Street. I ate there often because it was a few blocks from the Radio City Music Hall. The last automat closed in 1991; it was located at 200 E. 42nd Street. Everything old is new again. (The Nov. 17, 2006 edition of the *New York Sun* reported that a new eating place, based on the original automat would open with a few weeks under the name of Bamn.)

Another popular lunch-type place was any one of the Chock Full of Nuts eateries; there were many scattered around the city. Their menu was limited to two soups, two or three types of sandwiches, doughnuts (the chocolate ones were the best) and of course their wonderful coffee all served at a counter. Again, you might find yourself sitting next to a policeman (there were no policewomen then), a secretary or business tycoon. The Automats and Chock Full of Nuts were eating oases that we took for granted; now they are gone. On our return, if we went east for dinner, we always passed the Paul Manship gilded statue of *Prometheus* that faced the Rockefeller



Center skating rink. The statue was created in 1934.

In 1962, before I became a regular at the Radio City Music Hall, Jimmy Knepper called me to substitute for him at a rehearsal with Benny Goodman. Benny was preparing for a trip to Russia and had assembled an all star band including Zoot Sims, Phil Woods, Bill Crow and Mel Lewis. From that one rehearsal I can say I wouldn't have been happy working for the "King of Swing." Benny was demanding and could be demeaning by asking a musician to play his part alone so he could be criticized and to demonstrate who was the boss. Phil Woods speaks of a personal experience of this type when the band was in Russia. "When the band returned to the States," wrote Woods, "Zoot was asked what touring Russia with Benny Goodman was like. He replied, 'Every gig with Benny is like touring Russia.'"<sup>3</sup>

At the Goodman rehearsal, arranger Tadd Dameron supervised the readings of his arrangements. He drove Benny nuts by singing the melodic lines of the arrangement with his face about ten inches from Benny's ear. Benny kept walking away and Tad followed as though he was attached.

By 1979, the Music Hall show format had lost its appeal to younger audiences and there were rumors that the building would be leveled. Employees and citizens demonstrated against this possibility. Later that year the building was declared a New York City landmark and in 1987 the Radio City Music Hall was designated as a National Historic Landmark.

The building was saved but not all of the employees. In 1979, after forty-seven years of daily shows the Radio City Music Hall adopted a different entertainment schedule, but the annual Christmas and Easter shows continued, however, the rest of the time the theater was used for limited engagements of pop and rock performers. Another piece of history evaporated.

Another New York musical organization that I was affiliated with was the *Young Audience* Concerts. String quartets, woodwind and brass quintets that were registered with this program gave morning concerts and demonstrations in public elementary schools; each program would last about forty minutes. Each musician would speak about and demonstrate his or her instrument by playing a few bars of a tune of his or her choosing. Most often I played eight bars of *Black is the Color of my True Love's Hair*, an English folk song.

In New York City it's not uncommon to find schools six or eight blocks apart. So, we always played concerts in pairs. The first school concert was always at 8:30 a.m., which meant meeting the other musicians at 7:00 or 7:30. Sometimes we weren't completely awake at 8:00 or 8:30 in the morning, depending on where and how late we played the previous night. There were times when I played two or three pairs of *Young Audience Concerts* in one week. As I remember a pair of concerts, each lasting forty-five minutes paid about \$50 for the pair, acceptable for the time.

During these concerts we asked for a volunteer who would be instructed how to blow into the tuba. The tuba player always had an extra mouthpiece for this demonstration. The first sound usually brought a laugh from the audience of kids, but with a little tutoring the sound improved. For many of these children this was their introduction to classical music.

I also worked at the Latin Quarter and the Copacabana, which were major nightclubs in New York City. I played at each on a weekly basis or as a substitute, and always, as required, entered through the kitchen. The building that housed the Latin Quarter consisted of three or four floors. We would go to the roof and warm up by playing for a few minutes before the show. In the middle of New York City trumpet and trombone sounds blended with traffic and street noises; pedestrians below paid no attention.

It was in the mid 1960s when I began to doubt my Roman Catholic faith. Life experiences and new friends from different backgrounds brought on the questioning period. I began to read about other religions which led me to read *The Seven Story Mountain* by Thomas Merton, a worldly fellow who converted to Catholicism and became a Cistercian monk, and joined the strict community at Gethsemane near Elizabethtown, Kentucky. I read other books by Merton and eventually made a trip to Gethsemane where I spent a week participating in a religious retreat. The books and the retreat reinforced my Catholic faith and convinced me I had been on the right track all the time. Merton had lived in New York City and I made an occasional pilgrimage to and attended mass at the two churches he had attended. He died tragically in Thailand when he attended a conference of world religions.

As I have said more than once, many musicians could have been



comedians, and there were a few in the orchestra at the *Music Man* who fit this profile. Cartoons were created on the spot and notes were passed around reflecting something that happened on stage or in the audience. For a period of a week or so while I was playing the *Music Man* I was reading *No Man is an Island* by Thomas Merton. In my absence I left the book on my music stand, and when I returned after being away for a few days there was a note inside the book, that read "While you were away we discovered that a man is an island."

It was about this time I traveled to France, Germany and Italy for the first time. When I returned from this vacation I had coins leftover from the countries visited. I began to look for certain dates on U.S. coins that went through my hands. After a few months I began to study these coins and those brought back from Europe and became interested in the iconography of coin design. Almost immediately my interest centered on the coins of countries other than the U.S.

## Chapter IX

### Broadway, Other Gigs and Hangouts 1961

In 1959 Warner Brothers issued an album of tribute to Bix Beiderbecke titled "Bix MCMLIX. *Down Beat* magazine reported a comment that someone overheard in a record store: "Who is Bix McMlix?"

THERE WAS A natural progression for many musicians who had traveled with name bands: eventually they went to New York City or Los Angeles. When I moved to New York, I was fortunate to know a few musicians that moved to "The Apple" and were working there. Nevertheless, I made the rounds, introduced myself, and did what was necessary to become established so I could begin competing with all the other trombone players. To be hired as a staff musician at ABC, CBS or NBC was what most musicians wanted. However, about 1960 the number of staff musicians was being reduced, consequently, musicians looked elsewhere and most often it was Broadway.

A pit musician for Broadway musicals was one of the best remaining gigs. This required understanding the nuances of theater music and the ability to follow a conductor; classical training helped. As a young musician I had not given this type of playing much thought. However, soon after I moved to New York I realized that it would be advantageous to move in that direction. Classical musicians and jazz musicians with classical training often accepted work in Broadway pit orchestras providing the conductor would allow them to send a substitute when important or satisfying gigs came their way. As an example, years later when I worked in Broadway pit orchestras, Kenny Burrell, Frank Wess and other recognized jazz musicians were also there, and they often sent substitutes.

The move to a Broadway pit orchestra was relatively easy for competent brass players. However, saxophone players, all of whom played clarinet, were required to double on flute, bassoon or oboe. I knew a few saxophone players who played all three extra woodwinds. Some big band saxophone players who came to New York never learned to play one of the necessary additional woodwinds, and consequently couldn't move into Broadway orchestras. There is a



specific amount of money that is paid for each additional woodwind instrument played. I knew of examples where the musician who orchestrated the music was a friend of the woodwind players who had been hired for the show. Soprano saxophone, recorder, tin or penny whistle and ocarina, if written into the woodwind parts, meant more money. Most often justification for these doubles was required, of course.

It was about 1961 when I decided I wanted to play in a pit orchestra for a Broadway show. Being able to play well was not always sufficient. It was necessary to know someone in that specific field. When a contractor was approached, the question was always the same: "what shows have you played?" It was a typical "catch 22" situation: one couldn't play a show until you played one. A friend of mine, Irving Berger, Sy Berger's brother, was playing in the orchestra for the *Music Man*. The first trombone player was about to take a six-month leave of absence, so Irving told Herb Green, the conductor, about me; Green trusted my friend's judgment and gave me the job. I remained with the *Music Man* longer than six months because the fellow whom I replaced didn't return.

I probably played the score of the *Music Man* more than 300 times. All shows had eight performances each week including two matinees most often on Wednesday and Saturday. A year at any Broadway show added up to at least 400 performances, allowing for a two-week vacation. Since the *Music Man* was my first show I have a lot of fond memories from that period. When Marian the Librarian went to the footbridge to sing 'Til There was You, she was at the extreme opposite end of the stage from where I sat in the pit. The pit at the theater was not as deep as some, and Marian, who looked into the distance, always seemed to look at me. Perhaps she did as a point of reference, or maybe she was looking over my head. Regardless, I felt as though our eyes locked during the song. During performances of the *Music Man* I often thought of Mr. McClain, the music man who came to Mt. Healthy to start a band when I was thirteen-years old.

Robert Preston, a wonderful and friendly person, was the original Harold Hill in the *Music Man*, and he was perfect for the part; his replacements never came close to his performances. It was a pleasure to watch and listen to him night after night and he was congenial off stage. His contract expired while I was there. Later I returned

as a substitute when Eddie Albert and Bert Parks played the part of Harold Hill after Robert Preston left the show. On one occasion one of the two was ill, as was the understudy. Robert Preston flew from Los Angeles and after more than a year away from the part, he entered the stage on the assumption that dialogue and songs would return to his consciousness, and they did. It was as though he never left. During the opening *You Got Trouble* in one of these “return” performances Robert Preston’s fly was open. Some of the musicians got his attention, and with an impromptu 360 degree spin, Preston again faced the audience—problem solved.

After playing for six or eight months at the *Music Man*, Sol Gussakoff, the contractor, kept me busy substituting in other shows when somebody took a vacation, or somebody was off for a recording, or for some other reason. One of his shows that I played for a while was *Redhead* with Gwen Verdon and Richard Kiley, who had a distinctive voice, one that was used to sell products on television.

Music contractors establish a relationship with producers, and musicians form bonds with contractors and conductors. One contractor might have six shows running simultaneously. Contractors made a considerable amount of money. For the entire run of the show they received a salary for each show they contracted. When a busy conductor moves to a new show, he or she will often take certain musicians with them from the previous show.

Once I established a reputation as a good sight-reader, *i.e.*, somebody that could come in on short notice and without rehearsal read the show at sight, I received a lot of calls. There were times that I played four or five different shows in one week, a different one every night or matinee. When possible, if known in advance that a substitute was needed, I was asked to come in, perhaps the night before and sit in the pit and look at the music as the show was performed. But most of the time I was called in to substitute on short notice without a chance to see the music in advance.

I discovered that in most musical situations, outside of symphonic and chamber music, opera and ballet, and some Broadway musicals, musicians were seldom called on to execute 100% of their technical ability. Most often we utilized about 30-50% of what we were capable of because that was all the music demanded. Nevertheless, we were prepared to fulfill that unused portion of our ability, especially



when we were sight reading. Musicians who could perform only at the 30-50% level would be in trouble if they were called upon to produce more.

On one occasion Sol Gussakoff wanted me to substitute for a week in *My Fair Lady*, so I sat one night in the pit and followed the music to become familiar with it. When I arrived at my apartment that night I received a phone call from the contractor of the Carol Burnett musical, *Once Upon a Mattress*, a delightful show based on the fairytale *The Princess and the Pea* with music by Mary Rogers. I had played as a substitute in that show and now that Don Plumby,<sup>1</sup> the trombonist and assistant conductor became the conductor of the show, I was brought in to play his part. Fortunately Sol Gussakoff understood and hired someone else to play *My Fair Lady* for a week. I do remember sitting in the pit with the intention of substituting for *West Side Story*, but a call for another gig superseded that one.

When the shows ended each night there were specific “hangouts” for musicians, as there were for writers and actors in New York City. *Charlie’s Tavern* at 7th Ave. and 51st St. was the original musician hangout, later it was *Joe Harbor’s Spotlight* on Broadway near 52nd. Just around the corner, west of Broadway was *Junior’s*, and on 48th, East of 6th Avenue was *Jim & Andy’s*. The book, *Meet Me at Jim & Andy’s*, chronicles many of the interesting things that happened there. *Jim & Andy’s* was a place to pick up messages or leave your instrument or laundry while you did an errand. The book mentions trombonist Willie Dennis and vibraphone player Eddie Costa, both unknowingly spent their last night on earth in *Jim & Andy’s*. I stopped in after the show I was playing and joined them for a drink and conversation until about 1:00 a.m. On the news the next morning I heard that both were killed in an auto accident after they left *Jim & Andy’s*.

The musicians who played Broadway shows usually stopped in at *Joe Harbor’s Spotlight* after the show. The guys that did most of the recording in New York used *Jim & Andy’s* as their hangout. When the bartender at the *Spotlight* left and opened *Junior’s*, there was another bar to frequent. The jazz musicians went to all three bars. I went to the *Spotlight* most of the time but also spent time at the other two places as well as the *Carnegie Tavern* where the symphonic musicians went. If the conversations that took place in these meeting places could have been recorded, volumes of humor

and some profound musings would be the result. An incident that took place in *Junior's* has been told more than once. Al Thompson a saxophonist who played with a few bands was better known for his near-permanent residency at the bar in *Junior's*. Al was a baseball fanatic and knew all the statistics that one would expect someone with his obsession to know. To enter *Junior's* it was necessary to descend about six steps. Gene Quill, whose system was seldom void of alcohol, stepped over the threshold, tripped and slid past Al Thompson, who swiveled around and with palms down and arms moving in opposite directions yelled "SAFE!"

Gene Quill was a marvelous alto saxophone player with a quick wit, but, self-destructive. He had boxed with some success at one time, but in New York as a musician he usually got involved with someone larger than he was and usually was the loser. Gene Quill and Phil Woods had worked together and substituted for each other on gigs. Their album together was called Phil and Quill. Gene's humor stayed with him to the end. Phil Woods visited Gene in the hospital shortly before his death. "[Phil] leaned over the bed and said, 'Is there anything I can do?' and Gene whispered, 'Yeah, take my place.'"<sup>2</sup>

The second bartender at the *Spotlight* was Gene Williams, a good singer, who had worked with Claude Thornhill along with female singer Fran Warren. For a while Gene had his own band. It was a hip band with good musicians and wonderful arrangements but had little commercial appeal; in other words it was destined to fail. Gene became a bartender and was content to see and serve all his friends every night.

Marion Evans, a regular at the *Spotlight* was one of the busiest arrangers in the 1950s and early 1960s. He wrote arrangements for all the good singers from that period. I met Marion through some friends who had recorded with him on one of his many albums. One night at the *Spotlight*, while many of the patrons were drinking, talking and laughing, Marion and I had a lengthy conversation about classical composition and some avant-garde composers. Marion Evans invested in the stock market and followed it closely. In the late 1960s he surprised everyone and left the declining music scene and took a seat on the stock exchange. He saw where the music business was headed. The recording era for singers like Andy Williams, Eydie



Gorme and Steve Lawrence, Bobby Darin and many others was just about over.<sup>3</sup>

Trombonist Merv Gold, who was also an excellent photographer, was a regular at *Junior's* and the *Spotlight*. Merv was one of many musicians who could have been a comedian. One night Merv was in *Junior's* and before he moved on to the *Spotlight* he opened a briefcase and strategically placed one-dollar bills near the edges so when he closed it dollars were protruding that suggested the entire case was stuffed with money. He casually placed the briefcase on the bar at the *Spotlight* and ordered a drink and began a conversation.

For a while trombone cases were large enough to carry mutes, trombone stand and whatever else you could fit inside. Some musicians regarded them as heavy miniature caskets. One day Merv put a telephone and a bell that was connected to a small battery in his large trombone case. Seated in the rear of a taxi cab, Merv pressed a button that activated the bell. After two or three rings, Merv opened the case and into the phone said "hello." He paused a moment, then gave the phone to the driver. "It's for you," said Merv. When Merv Gold gave his wife a cookbook, she put the book aside and said she would wait for the movie.

One of the best drummers I worked with was Sol Gubin, another comedian. One day Sol said that he was changing his name to Gilbert because of all the jokes about his name. My reply was you're changing it to Sol Gilbert? "No," he said, "Gilbert Gubin." The words of drummer Panama Francis apply to all good drummers especially Sol Gubin: "The drummer drives. Everybody else rides."

The gathering place not only for classical musicians but also for ballet dancers and some writers was the *Carnegie Tavern*, in the same building as Carnegie Hall. Since I did concert work as well, I often dropped in to see who might be there. A few blocks away is the Carnegie Deli, where I had my first bagel with Nova Scotia salmon and cream cheese. New York bagels are like no other. Water for boiling the dough prior to baking is extremely important, and New York City has good water. At a comparative tasting of bottled water, bottled New York tap water concealed in a brown bag was voted the best.

Across from the Carnegie Tavern on 56th Street was Patelson's House of Music, the Mecca for classical musicians in search of any

piece of music in print. When nearby, I would go in just to browse through the bins, stacks and shelves of music for solo trombone as well as trombone trio and quartet music, brass quintet, and cello and viola da gamba music, some of which was playable on trombone.

Another one of the Carnegie Tavern patrons was Bill Bell, a memorable teacher and tuba player with the New York Philharmonic who retired in the 1960s. Bill was known for his enjoyment of quaffing a few and his midsection confirmed it. Every St. Patrick's Day a ritual took place and I participated on occasion. Brass players who knew Bill would congregate with him at McSorley's Old Ale House, a pub on 7th Street between the Bowery and 2nd Avenue in lower Manhattan and the oldest functioning pub in New York City (February 17, 2004 was the 150th anniversary of this famous tavern-pub-bar. There was a large container behind and above the bar that held hundreds and hundreds of wishbones from chickens served to customers. These date back to the Civil War when soldiers placed them there as a memento, hoping they would return to drink again at their favorite drinking spot. I have a feeling that the Board of Health might have intervened to end this tradition.

McSorley's also enjoyed the patronage of Eugene O'Neill, one of the many writers who decades earlier frequented this place. Brendan Behan immortalized this drinking establishment in *Brendan Behan's New York*. When I went there in the 1960s women were not allowed to enter. (A Supreme Court ruling changed that in the 1970s.) The walls were cluttered and aromas emanating from the walls and fixtures permeated with smoke, cooking and boozy odors identified McSorley's. I have not seen the movie, but was told that the importance of McSorley's to the history of the Irish in New York City was dramatized in *Once Upon a Time in America*.

In addition to Broadway work and concerts I also was hired for free-lance recordings, transcriptions and television commercials. The latter included a commercial for Jordasche Jeans, the hottest brand available at the time. I also remember doing some automobile commercials including one for Chrysler. Recordings and commercials were always fun to do because when you walked into a recording studio you never knew who the musicians would be there. The dates I did included some of the best players in the business including trumpeters Doc Severinsen and Bernie Glow, trombonist Urbie Green,



saxophonists Al Cohn, Arnie Lawrence and Gene Quill, bassist Milt Hinton and drummers Sol Gubin, Gus Johnson and Ossie Johnson, all wonderful musicians and it was satisfying to be among them.

In the late 1960s there were so many free-lance recordings taking place that musicians like David Nadian, concertmaster with the New York Philharmonic, resigned, I was told, to take advantage of this recording activity. With his reputation he was in demand and could count on three dates each day, Monday-Friday and some on weekends. This work and free-lance concerts probably exceeded his salary with the New York Philharmonic. String players on pop recordings most often played goose eggs (whole notes) with an occasional musical figure added: extremely monotonous but monetarily satisfying. I remember being in a recording studio with David Nadian where the music was less than challenging for everyone. I watched him bowing goose eggs and remembered that a few months earlier I had watched him as concert master at a New York Philharmonic concert. I'm certain that musicians who made a similar move also played free-lance concerts and found time to play chamber music, if only for personal satisfaction.

Playing with rehearsal bands was also satisfying. Bands that played just for pleasure are common everywhere and anywhere jazz musicians are found. Most often musicians accept gigs that are musically unfulfilling but pay the rent. Consequently, rehearsal bands will always be around as long as there are good arrangements and good musicians to play them. One of the many New York rehearsal bands was led by Bill Russo. Arrangers took this opportunity to hear their arrangements, and there was never a shortage of musicians to play them. I had met Bill Russo when Stan Kenton's band played *Cincinnati* and I worked as a substitute. In New York I renewed my acquaintance with Bill and on occasion I played with his rehearsal band, usually to replace Wayne Andre. (Bill Russo died at 74 in Chicago on January 18, 2003.)

Rehearsal bands seldom played gigs. Nevertheless, Bill's band performed at a benefit performance for some forgettable cause and Steve Allen was the Master of Ceremonies. Billie Holiday was scheduled to be there and she finally showed up at almost the last minute before intermission. Drugs, tobacco and alcohol had destroyed her health and she needed assistance to take her place

on stage. The microphone was placed close to the side of the stage and she was led to the point where she could grab the mike without having to be totally mobile on her own. It was her last performance. The following day the *New York Times* said Billie Holiday was taken to the hospital. She died a few days later on July 17, 1959 in Room 6A12 of the Metropolitan Hospital.

There were other rehearsal bands primarily led by arrangers who wanted to hear their music. Lyn Oliver's studio on Broadway was a popular place for these rehearsals. These ad hoc bands provided plenty of opportunities to play with some of the good jazz players in New York City. I enjoyed playing with Nat Pierce's band in New York (I knew Nat from Woody Herman's band) and after many years in New York he moved to Los Angeles, organized a band there, and recorded at least two albums.

One of the defining sounds on Broadway in New York in the 1950s and 1960s was a shop near 50th Street that sold popular records and had loud speakers to blast the music along Broadway. Whatever was popular was more than audible within 100 feet of this record shop. Consequently, when the theme from the movie *The Third Man* was popular in the 1950s and when the Broadway musical *My Fair Lady* ran for six years in the 1960s, one could not escape affiliated recordings that became a nuisance. Debbie Boone's recording of *You Light up my Life* seemed to be in the air on Broadway for the longest period of time. It became almost painful to walk near that record shop. A famous record shop, the Commodore was located on 42nd Street not far from Grand Central Station.

In the world of music, Broadway, New York's Main Street, plays an important part because of the number of tunes with a connection to this famous thoroughfare. *Lullaby of Broadway*, *Manhattan*, *Manhattan Serenade* and other show tunes honor New York and Broadway. There are other tunes that came from the jazz world including *Broadway*, a tune that jazz musicians like to play, not to be confused with the tune made popular by George Benson. The Big Apple refers to New York City; musicians refer to it as "The Apple." Paying homage to Broadway, Gerry Mulligan wrote *The Apple Core*. If "The Apple" was the place to be, then Broadway was the Core. Duke Ellington's *Main Stem* is an ode to Broadway. The *Big Apple Night Club* once occupied the corner of 135th Street and 7th Avenue. A plaque



that acknowledges this defunct club is attached to the building at this location. It is my understanding that the corner of 54th Street and Broadway was called the *Big Apple Corner*. (A segment of New York society concerned with fashion and wealth might consider 5th Avenue as New York's Main Street.)

Other musical references to New York locations include Gramercy Park, an elite section that prompted Artie Shaw to name his quintet the Gramercy Five. Another section called Chelsea, originally a Dutch farm, was named after a section in London. Billy Strayhorn, Duke Ellington's alter ego and soul mate, wrote the lovely *Chelsea Bridge*. Diedrich Knickerbocker, Washington Irving's fictional narrator of the satirical *History of New York* was acknowledged by be bop musicians. Drummer and composer-arranger Tiny Kahn wrote and arranged *Father Knickerbopper*, a classic that was recorded in the 1940s by Chubby Jackson, Teddy Charles, Ted Heath, the English bandleader and others. The big band recordings of Chubby Jackson are among the few sources where you can hear Ray Turner, the jazz tenor saxophonist who received little or no recognition, except from his peers.

If there were no calls to play Broadway shows I accepted whatever came my way. Jimmy Roselli was a good singer who received some acclaim, but never made it as big as some male singers even though he recorded about 20 albums. His arrangements were written by some of the best arrangers from that period. I worked with Jimmy a few times in and around New York. On one occasion he was performing in Philadelphia, which is a short train ride from New York. Bill Watrous called me the night before and asked me if I could cover for him. (He obviously had received a call for a more lucrative gig.) So, I took a morning train to arrive in Philadelphia in time for the rehearsal. Two shows were scheduled. At the end of that show my chops were practically bleeding, because I was playing the lead part and even though the arrangements were good, there were very few rests. It was almost constant playing. I just don't see how I could have possibly played a second show. God was with me when the second one was canceled.

Jimmy Roselli and Jerry Vale always seemed to have a few Runyonesque-type guys around them. Another friend of mine who had worked with Jimmy Roselli told me about the time he worked

for a week with Jimmy in New York and needed to attend a school function to please his son. My friend made arrangements to have a substitute replace him. One of the “gentlemen” pulled him aside and said, “You will be here tomorrow night or else.” My friend played the following night and disappointed his son.

There were musicians who played a political game to get jobs by sending gifts to contractors on holidays and birthdays. I could not bring myself to do that. But I did OK anyway because of my sight reading ability. As previously mentioned, I had worked on sight reading during my undergraduate days at the Cincinnati Conservatory knowing that it would be an asset one day. So, when an emergency arose or a last-minute change took place I was one of a minority who would be called upon to sight-read something at the last minute.

One of the most pleasurable sight-reading experiences took place when I worked with Tito Puente. (In the 1950s and 1960’s the three hot Latin bands were Tito Puente, Tito Rodriguez, and Machito. These bands were most often heard at the Palladium on Broadway near 53rd Street where the best Latin dancers went.) Tito Puente was playing a beach club on Long Island and wasn’t using trombones on the gig. Frankie Laine was part of the show on that weekend. My friend Sy Berger and I were hired to play with Tito when Frankie Laine’s music was played, which called for trombones. After the first show Tito asked us if we would like to stick around because he had trombone parts for some of his arrangements and we enthusiastically said yes. What an exciting weekend that was. Music set to exciting Afro-Cuban rhythms is just another form of jazz.

Although I could improvise, I considered myself as a section player. (I preferred to be in the middle of an ensemble surrounded by sounds to which I contributed.) In a big band situation I often played a jazz chorus or portion of one as part of the arrangement, but, I did not attempt to sustain six or eight inventive choruses as part of a small group like the legendary jazz players did. There are differences of opinion about playing multiple improvised choruses. Charlie Parker once said that “if you played more than four choruses, you were just practicing.” I think it was Buddy Rich, who, when the soloist appeared to be finished, motioned to take another chorus and another until the musician asked how long this would go on. Buddy,



or whoever it was, said “until you play something of importance.” Sonny Rollins said that if you play more than two improvised choruses of anything, you better have a good reason.

I was hired for another and longer lasting job about this time when Art DeCenzo and I shared a four-room apartment on Claremont Avenue, down the street from the Juilliard School of Music and two blocks from 125th Street and Broadway. I received a call from Sol Gussakoff, who was contracting an orchestra for *Camelot*. It's not customary to audition for a Broadway Show. Musicians are to be hired based on their ability and reputation. Nevertheless, the conductor-to-be for *Camelot*, Franz Allers, an Austrian who spoke with a German accent insisted on auditions. He was a symphonic conductor who had conducted at the Metropolitan Opera as well as for major symphony orchestras around the world. Sol told Franz about me and I auditioned. A good friend of mine, Gene Orcutt also auditioned. The score called for two trombones; I was given the first chair and Gene Orcutt was assigned the other chair.

For the trial or break-in period the show went to Toronto for five weeks and Boston for four. It's customary for conductors of musicals to take only the first chair players on the road and to fill out the orchestra with local musicians. The musicians from New York City included the concert master (Nat Goldstein, who later joined the New York Philharmonic), 1st trumpet Andrew “Bunny” Baron, trombone, French horn (Arthur Berv), percussion and drums. In Toronto the orchestra was augmented with members of the Toronto Symphony, an excellent orchestra. With constant changes in the show there were daily rehearsals, the payments for which fattened our weekly salary-checks.

The legend of King Arthur and his round table called for knights, some with beards in the cast of *Camelot*. After a week or two many of the knights on stage discarded false beards and began to grow natural beards. This gave me idea to do the same and the van Dyke I grew has been with me ever since.

While in Boston we rehearsed so much there was no time for sightseeing. In Boston a few local theatrical people were given access to rehearsals. During the last week three of these locals approached me outside the stage door and invited me to dinner. I was a bit surprised, but since I had no plans for dinner I said OK.

They seemed to be giving me an inordinate amount of attention. I diplomatically asked why they singled me out for dinner and all the attention. Well, the assistant stage director, who also had a beard resembled me. The group from Boston thought they were speaking with a New York stage director and were trying to make a New York connection. Dinner came to an end sooner than they had planned.

The *Camelot* cast and musicians returned to New York and the show opened to good reviews and ran for a little over two years. (And yes, Julie Andrews, who played Guenivere is as nice as she appears to be.) At this time Art DeCenzo and I decided that we wanted a place closer to mid-town. We found a big six-room pad with two fireplaces on the east side of Manhattan at the corner of Lexington Avenue and 53rd Street. This east side location was extremely convenient to everything that we needed. It was on the 6th floor, the top floor. Most New York residential buildings that were built in the late 19th century have five or six floors and were built before elevators were mandatory and tenants expected them. The daily climb, sometimes two or three times to the 6th floor didn't bother us. Climbing five or six flights of stairs each day, often more than once, was good cardiovascular exercise for New Yorkers who lived on upper floors of New York brownstone buildings. Robert Redford, Jane Fonda and other actors who performed in the movie version of Neil Simon's *Barefoot in the Park* did not exemplify typical New Yorkers. Each time they climbed to the top floor they almost needed oxygen. Now that I think about it, at the time I don't remember seeing many excessively overweight people in New York City.

Franz Allers, the conductor for *Camelot* was one of those people who never relaxed; he treated every night as opening night. During the dialogue, that might last anywhere from two to ten minutes, pit musicians keep a book handy. For a while, Franz would not allow anybody to read, but he lost that battle. After a few weeks we were able to read while listening for particular words that alerted us that the next musical cue was a minute or so away. Nevertheless, Franz was very strict and this book reading in the pit annoyed him night after night.

Within minutes after the end of the first of two acts, the same group of musicians, stage hands and actors were seated at a poker table in the musician's dressing area. Richard Burton in costume,



who played King Arthur, was one of the first to be seated. Not having an interest in cards I was not part of this nightly ritual, one that goes on at all theaters.

The original third trumpet player in the *Camelot* orchestra was absent from all the Wednesday and Saturday matinees. The substitute took over so he could play the trumpet announcement for each race as he did daily at Aqueduct race track, a short distance from New York City. Sometime later I went to the track, as I did once or twice each year and there he was in red jacket and black cap blowing the familiar ta ta ta ta taka ta ta taka ta ta ta ta....

The orchestra for *Camelot* was excellent. Franz Allers had selected the best musicians available. It was in this orchestra where I met a marvelous French horn player, Arthur Berv, who had played under Toscanini in the NBC Symphony. Arthur had three brothers and they made up most of the French horn section in the NBC Symphony. Arthur was just one of many musicians that became available for Broadway work due to the reduction of musicians at the networks. Arthur and other members of the NBC Symphony had interesting stories to tell about Toscanini. I heard that Toscanini when speaking to a trumpet player said "God tells me how the music should sound, but you stand in the way." John Clark, bass trombonist, said he believed that Toscanini thought the musicians in the NBC Symphony lived in Carnegie Hall, where the maestro had an apartment. At any time of the day or night if Toscanini was moved to record a particular piece of music he called the manager of the orchestra and told him of his wishes. The manager began calling the musicians while reasoning with Toscanini in an attempt to explain that the musicians had to be assembled, some from moderate distances. The maestro would have none of it: he was ready.

*Camelot* opened on a Tuesday or Wednesday and, as custom dictated, we recorded the cast album on the following Sunday. As I recall the recording took place at the RCA Recording Studio at 44th and 6th Avenue. (This cavernous space is no longer used for recordings that require large orchestras in New York, or anywhere, and IRS auditors now occupy the space.)

A normal recording date was three hours long, but this multi-session date went much longer. We began at 10 a.m. and were still recording after midnight with breaks for lunch and dinner. Still,

the recording process went smoothly except for some last minute changes. One of these involved Marjorie Smith who sang the part of Morgan LeFay, she could not perform to the satisfaction of the conductor and Messrs. Lerner and Lowe, the creators of *Camelot*, so they decided to do it over using the understudy, Mary Sue Berry who also sang in the chorus. She, of course, had by this time (2:00 a.m.) left with the other chorus members. Mary Sue, who lived not too far from the studio, was called back. She nailed the song in one take and brought the last session to an end, to the relief of the tired and sleepy musicians. But the remuneration for making the album was good



**Richard Burton, Julie Andrews and Franz Allers rehearsing a section of *Camelot* before recording it.**



**One Trumpet player dozing, another yawning at the *Camelot* recording at 2:30 a.m. Trombonists Gene Orcutt and Gene Hessler.**



because of the overtime after four successive recording sessions.

Mary Sue, the singer just mentioned was my “main squeeze” at the time. She was a talented musician: a pianist and a singer. As with a lot of other Broadway performers, Mary Sue lived just a few blocks from the theater district. She was a good cook as well, so I often had dinner at her place before we went to the theater. We dated for a quite some time. In fact, marriage was discussed but it just didn’t seem to be the right move at the time. A friend, Bob Hauck, was substituting for me in *Camelot* when I had other gigs. After a period of a couple months, he said, “Mary Sue is a very nice person, do you mind if I have a cup of coffee with her some night?” I said, “Why not.” Well, to make short what could be a long story, Bob married her and I remained friends with both of them. (My parents, like most, kept asking when will I get married.)

While performing in Broadway pit orchestras I occasionally worked as an extra trombonist with the New York Philharmonic. Their performance pattern consisted of eight services each week. This was, as I remember, most often four rehearsals and four performances. Leonard Bernstein, the permanent conductor at the time, conducted the Anton Bruckner *Eighth Symphony*, which called for an additional brass section.<sup>4</sup> Though we hadn’t met previously, Eddie Herman, the first trombonist recommended me. The extra brass section was positioned at the rear of the audience on the orchestra level. We played on cue two or three times throughout the symphony. At the end of the performance the extra brass section hurried to the back stage area. I was standing next to Bernstein as we waited in the wings before we went on stage for a bow. Ecstatic and unable to contain himself after this electrifying performance, just before we went on stage he said “it’s like being high on some kind of fantastic pot!”

Don Butterfield was the extra tuba player that was hired for the Bruckner concert. Don is an exceptional player and we worked together often on a variety of gigs. During the break of one of the Philharmonic rehearsals Don went to the podium and draped his arm around Lennie and proceeded to ask what I know was an unnecessary question about a specific place in his tuba part. Almost immediately a flash bulb went off behind me. Don has a scrapbook full of photos of himself and musical celebrities. This is just one of the many photos that he staged with a friend in position with a

camera. Yes, Don was an opportunist, but I could have and should have done the same thing.

Another time the New York Philharmonic did the final scene from Richard Wagner's *Siegfried* and I played the second trombone part. Eddie Irwin, the second trombonist played the bass trumpet part. (The bass trumpet is not included in the normal instrumentation in symphony orchestras. Nevertheless, Wagner and other composers would sometimes use it in their orchestrations.) Whenever Richard Wagner is mentioned I think of what two of America's writers and storytellers said about his music. "Wagner's music," said Mark Twain, "is better than it sounds." Woody Allen once said "I can't listen to that much Wagner. I start getting the urge to conquer Poland." I played another series of concerts with the New York Philharmonic when William Steinberg was the guest conductor. However, I don't remember the contents of the program. Sitting in the middle of one of the best orchestras in the world, with Wagner's music enveloping me was a heady experience.

When Louis van Haney retired as second trombonist from the New York Philharmonic Leonard Bernstein didn't want to go through the rigors of auditioning people. Consequently, Eddie Herman, the first trombonist told me he submitted a few names and mine was among them. I don't know if this was true, but I'd like to believe it was. Gil Cohen was appointed, and there could not have been a better choice. I had worked with Gil in numerous free-lance orchestral situations and called to congratulate him on the Philharmonic appointment.

Musicians know the names of their counterparts in major orchestras as baseball fans and players know the names of ball players. When someone is about to retire the word spreads immediately. When an opening was announced for the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra numerous trombonists applied, including me, some from other major orchestras. Each applicant submitted a resume of performance experience and a list of teachers. This required resume from interested trombonists shortened the lengthy list. As I remember there were over 75 trombonists who auditioned. I played a poor audition and didn't get the gig.

It's safe to say that quite a few of those who auditioned studied with Emory Remington at one time. This legendary teacher was the reason for trombone students to head for the Eastman School of Music. Mr.



Remington probably produced more successful trombone players than any other teacher in the world. I always felt that something was missing since I hadn't had his guidance. Trumpet and trombone players were always seeking the type of edge that would lead to performance perfection.

I participated in other classical music jobs while playing *Camelot*. One of the most memorable of these came with the Leningrad Philharmonic during its tour in the United States. One of its concerts at the old Madison Square Garden included the Tchaikovsky *1812 Overture*. This piece calls for a huge brass section in addition to the one in the orchestra. I don't remember all the extra musicians, just that Jack Elliot and I shared the first trombone part. Jack Elliot, who was a few years older than I, had been a staff musician and ABC for many years. He was a gentleman and an excellent player. Later, at the Radio City Music Hall, I worked with his son Dennis, also an excellent trombonist.

During my time at *Camelot* I played quite a few classical concerts, having someone to cover for me with the approval of the *Camelot* orchestra conductor. For, example, I played concerts with the Orchestra of America conducted by Richard Korn. This orchestra, when conducted by Korn, was devoted to playing compositions by lesser known American composers and lesser-known works by better known American composers and performed most often at Carnegie Hall. The trombone section most often consisted of Jim Thompson, me and bass trombonist Gil Cohen.

Playing with this orchestra gave me an opportunity to perform some arcane music by George W. Chadwick, William R. Chapman, Gottschalk, William Grant Still, Edward McDowell and others, many of whom I, and most musicians had never heard of. One composition called for a specially equipped violin, probably one of only a few in existence. This violin had an attached horn similar to but smaller than the one on the first Victor "His Master's Voice" victrola. The horn, attached to the upper body of the instrument, was intended to project the sound of the instrument. With the added weight and possibly partially blocking the player's sight, I can see why this invention before microphones were available didn't gain success. In 2007 while watching *Garden of the Moon*, a Busby Berkeley film from 1938 on television, a specialty musical number at a nightclub

included a violinist playing the violin with the horn.

The Orchestra of America accompanied the American debut of Joan Sutherland, the Australian soprano. The concert was so successful that it was necessary to repeat it. The first concert was at Town Hall and the second, about a week later, took place at Carnegie Hall. At the time of the repeat performance I had a stomach virus. I played through the first part of the concert all right. Toward the end of the concert I knew a trip to the men's room was necessary. As Joan Sutherland walked on stage for her bow, I ran from the stage with the tails on my full dress suit flying behind me.

Otherwise the Sutherland concert was pleasant. And it enabled me to play at Carnegie Hall, again, which in the 1950s had been slated for destruction to make way for a new apartment building, which left me thinking I would never get to perform in that venerable hall again. But Isaac Stern, one of the world's greatest violinists, gathered major financial and civic support to save the building.

After *Camelot* ran for about six months, I received a call from Elliot Lawrence, who was now conducting on Broadway. He had conducted at least two successful shows including *Bye Bye Birdie* before he became musical director for *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. Elliot wanted me to play in the pit orchestra and I was tempted to accept it. But I told him that as much as I wanted, it might be the wrong move. I had just started *Camelot* and did not want to anger the contractor who recommended me for the show. So, I said no to Elliot and found out later that he hired Vinnie Forrest.

But I eventually joined Elliot in the pit at *How to Succeed in Business*. About eight months later, I ran into Vinnie, whom I had met in Toledo when he was working with the Elliot Lawrence band in 1949. Vinnie settled in New York before I did and was very successful there because he was such an excellent player. Both of our shows finished about the same time and our paths crossed one night as we walked to our respective subway entrances. Vinnie, who had accepted the job that I refused, was playing in the pit orchestra for *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. This particular night Vinnie said he had been offered a new show, and knowing Elliot would approve, asked if I would like to replace him at *How to Succeed*. This time I said "yes" immediately.

At the time Franz Allers, the conductor at *Camelot* was guest



conducting in Europe. So I went to Sol Gussakoff, the contractor and gave him a diplomatic story about why I wanted to leave. With a little coercing from me and grumbling from him, he agreed. To my advantage a trombonist who often substituted for me had been Aller's choice as my substitute and I therefore figured that when Franz returned he wouldn't be too upset to see this fellow in my chair. It worked out that way, and I maintained a good relationship with Franz. A week or two later before Franz returned, I moved over to *How to Succeed in Business*. Although the show had been running for more than a year, I was there for an additional two years.

Bill Elton was the first trombonist and assistant conductor for *How to Succeed in Business*. When Bill conducted I moved over and played his part and a substitute covered my part. On one occasion Bill was away doing a recording and I was playing his part. In most shows the assistant conductor conducts the exit music. When the show ended and it was time for the exit music, Elliot handed me the baton as he left the pit. I put my instrument aside and jumped onto the podium. Consequently, even though it was only once, I can say I conducted on Broadway.

Robert Morse and Michelle Lee (who were extremely friendly) played the two leading parts in *How to Succeed in Business*. Rudy Vallee, a retired bandleader from the 1930s, was hired to play the chairman of the board of the company that brought all the characters together in the story. Zane Miller, a jazzophile and one of the people who suggested that I put these words to paper, asked me about a bandleader-singer who used a megaphone in the 1930s. I identified him as Rudy Vallee and said that I had worked with him, not as a member of his band, but in *How To Succeed in Business*. When Rudy Vallee worked as a band leader I was in grammar school.

Elliot always selected excellent musicians for the shows that he conducted, and *How to Succeed* was no exception. Elliot understood the need for musicians to continue free-lance work and never objected to acceptable substitutes. Kenny Burrell, *e.g.*, played guitar in the orchestra and had such a good reputation in the jazz field he was always busy and used Wayne Wright as his substitute. Ultimately, Kenny left the show and Wayne took his place.

But some players left the show permanently. Dale Clevenger, a young musician who played with the Kansas City Symphony held

the French horn chair in *How to Succeed in Business* (his first job in New York). After a few months he said he was going to Chicago to audition for the Chicago Symphony. Everyone recognized that this “kid” had a lot of confidence but didn’t give him much of a chance with the usual competition from seasoned players who would be competing at the audition. Dale returned to tell us that he would be leaving the show to join the Chicago Symphony as principal French horn player in the fall. Years later, as I was writing these memoirs, I heard a recording of the Mozart Horn *Concerto in E Flat*. It was the Chicago Symphony with Dale Clevenger as soloist. There were other players who left Broadway shows that I was playing to join the Boston and Philadelphia Orchestras.

The lead trumpet player in the orchestra for *How To Succeed* was Stan Fishelson, the powerful lead player in the Woody Herman band about 1950. Stan had a sense of humor but was like the people who ride the same bus every day and expect to occupy the same seat, as most church goers sit in the same pew every Sunday. In the basement area of the theatre, where we had our lockers and where the omnipresent card game went on during intermission, Stan liked to place “his” chair near a particular post and warm up before the show. When he was unable to go through this routine at the appointed place he was unhappy. To make certain he always had his chair in the same place, Stan wound a chain through the wooden chair supports and around the post and secured it with a lock. A week or two later one of the musicians came in early and with a screw driver disassembled the chair and left the chain hanging on the post. Stan went ballistic when he came to the theater that night and found a chain but no chair.

Each Broadway orchestra elected two representatives who met those from other theaters every few weeks and once each week when contract negotiations were near, to discuss what changes and demands would be presented. Each theater was different in size and surroundings including the working facilities for musicians. I was one of the two representatives from the orchestra at *How to Succeed in Business*. After meeting for months to create the list of requests and changes that we wanted, including length of contract and salary increases based on cost of living figures, the list was presented to the Broadway theater management. Most often management was



only concerned about the monetary “bottom line,” not the safety and comfort of the musicians.

After two or three weeks negotiations with theater management was deadlocked, primarily over salaries. Mayor Robert Wagner, who knew a strike would affect the city negatively, insisted the representatives for the musicians and management come to his offices at City Hall. We went there after the show ended, about 11:00 p.m. on the final day of our previous contract. Mayor Wagner said no one leaves until a settlement is reached, as he and the key representatives from the musicians union and management went from the room where the musicians were to the one where the management people waited. Both sides came together in one room when we came to an agreement about 8:00 a.m. on the following morning. As tired as we were, we were elated because we achieved most of what we wanted and deserved.

I attended parties for the cast of some shows and private parties as well. The cast and the musicians at *How to Succeed* were extremely friendly, so I had a party at my digs at 53rd Street and Lexington Avenue, where I had moved a few months earlier, and invited some musicians and some of the females in the chorus. It was a wonderful party and the highlight of the evening was listening to Aaron Bell play and sing many of his original songs. Aaron, who played with Cab Calloway, Andy Kirk, John Coltrane, Duke Ellington and many others was the double bass player in the orchestra for *How to Succeed*. Aaron was a marvelous and humble musician. He sat at the piano, played and sang one tune after the other, all originals of his. All his songs had rich harmonies and melodies that took surprising turns with the flavor of *If You Could See Me Now*, *Everything Happens to Me*, *Why Try to Change Me Now*, *Angel Eyes*, *Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most*, and *'Round Midnight*. If you recognize any of these titles you know what I mean. Nevertheless, and to the best of my knowledge, none of Aaron Bell's music was recorded. What a pity. In 1976 he received a PhD from Columbia University and spent his last years as chairman of the performing arts department at Essex County College, in Newark, New Jersey. (Aaron died at eighty-two on July 28, 2003.)

Musicians who play in the pit orchestras for Broadway musicals can get “lost” in the business. If a musician becomes buried in a show

that runs for years and years, his or her name on the “outside,” as we called the free-lance world, becomes unfamiliar. Consequently, to remain visible musicians accept concerts and recording dates to stay alive for when the show closes. The wise conductor understands this and does not prohibit musicians from accepting outside gigs providing the conductor approves of the substitute. By playing different music every so often the musician remains happier in the pit. Nevertheless, some musicians are content to only play the show. If they do this for a few successive long-running shows, they become almost unknown on the outside. We often equated this limited security-conscious outlook with having a daytime “lunch bucket” gig.

While at *How to Succeed*, I sent a substitute to cover for me so I could play the final Symphony of the Air concert. When Arturo Toscanini retired in 1954 (he died in 1957) the NBC Symphony continued performing as the Symphony of the Air. With competing orchestras and other free-lance opportunities it became difficult to maintain the same personnel. As one of other free-lance players I participated in that concert that brought a world famous orchestra to its end; Leopold Stokowski was the conductor. The following night I was back in the pit on Broadway.

If one was playing in the pit for a Broadway musical at year's end a New Year's Eve performance was guaranteed. However, an “outside” New Year's Eve gig would put more money in your pocket. With the exception of one or two theaters on Broadway, all the theaters are located between Broadway and 8th Avenue on 45th to 48th Streets. Until the starting time was changed the curtain came down on most musicals about 11:00 p.m. If I worked at the theater on New Year's Eve I crossed Broadway on my way home. Everyone else was running south to Time's Square to be part of the ritual celebration as I tried to avoid the mob. I felt like a trout swimming upstream.

Later in that New Year I almost agreed to accept a position at a show that was about to open, *Fiddler on the Roof* contracted by Milt Green. A few years earlier I had accepted a summer job in Pennsylvania at a resort called Tammiment near Stroudsburg in the Pocono Mountains. The musical conductor at Tammiment was Milt Green, and all the musicians came to the Poconos from New York City for a pleasant six or eight weeks with all of our food and lodging included. We



played for dancing each night and rehearsed during the day for a weekly musical review in the Tammiment Theater. There was a staff of writers, including Woody Allen (who walked the grounds with his head down as he sought humorous ideas), and composers, who wrote the weekly musical reviews. In addition, we performed a major original musical review at the end of the season. Jonathan Tunick, a recent graduate of Juilliard, played tenor saxophone and was the arranger for the shows and reviews. Jon has since become one of the most respected arrangers on Broadway and in the movie industry. When I met Jon I knew he was destined for greatness. Over the years, a number of writers, singers and dancers who became successful on Broadway spent their early years at Tammiment including comedian Dick Shawn and composer Mary Rogers, daughter of Richard Rogers. Milt Green, the conductor said that he would like to use me in a Broadway show when he had the opportunity.

## Chapter X

### Touring: Africa and Round the World 1964-1969

When a young lady discovered her seat mate on an airplane was a jazz musician she said, "I just love jazz, except when it sounds like they're making it up."

MILT GREEN LIVED up to his Pocono promise when he hired me to play in the pit for *From A to Z*, a musical review that starred Hermione Gingold with music by Mary Rogers. *The Sound of Music* by Mary's father Richard Rogers was running in a theater nearby and the female Rogers didn't hesitate to poke fun at her famous father. In one scene that included a character who resembled Maria in *The Sound of Music* and who couldn't be found at that moment, another character said something like "she was probably teaching a lark how to pray."

Milt came through for me again in 1964, when my show, *How to Succeed in Business* was in its last year. Now conducting a different show on Broadway, Milt had the contractor who was hiring musicians for *Fiddler on the Roof* call and offer me the job in the pit. I knew that it was going to be a successful show; no doubt about it. However, just before I received that call, I had heard about a thirty-piece concert band being organized for a State Department trip to Africa. I wanted to go to Africa and had to make a decision. The conductor for the African trip was to be Paul Taubman, who played organ for soap operas and was not known for his civility, but I decided to seek the job anyway.

The musicians who were hired for this African trip were selected for their versatility. In addition to concerts, the band was, at times, to be divided into small groups, including jazz groups that would perform or give demonstrations at schools and embassy functions. I investigated and heard that the band was all set except one chair and that was the first trombone chair. I called the contractor who was in charge of the hiring, a person I had never heard of who also had never heard of me. I'm usually not very aggressive when it comes to selling myself, but I decided I would, and did it over the phone.



When he asked what I had done and I rattled off the things I did, the bands I worked with, the shows I played, etc. He was impressed enough to hire me without hearing me play. Elliot Lawrence, the conductor at *How to Succeed* agreed to let me take a leave of absence for the 12-week tour of Africa. Even though I knew *Fiddler on the Roof* would be a success, and a show that any musician would grab, I made the necessary telephone call to turn down the show. After all, how many opportunities are there to go to Africa?

The band for the African tour rehearsed for two or three weeks and performed some concerts before we left. Since we were going to Equatorial Africa, we were required to get a number of immunization shots well in advance to build up our resistance. We received inoculations for tetanus, plague, malaria and other diseases. My arm was extremely sore from some of those shots, because booster shots were required over a period of weeks.

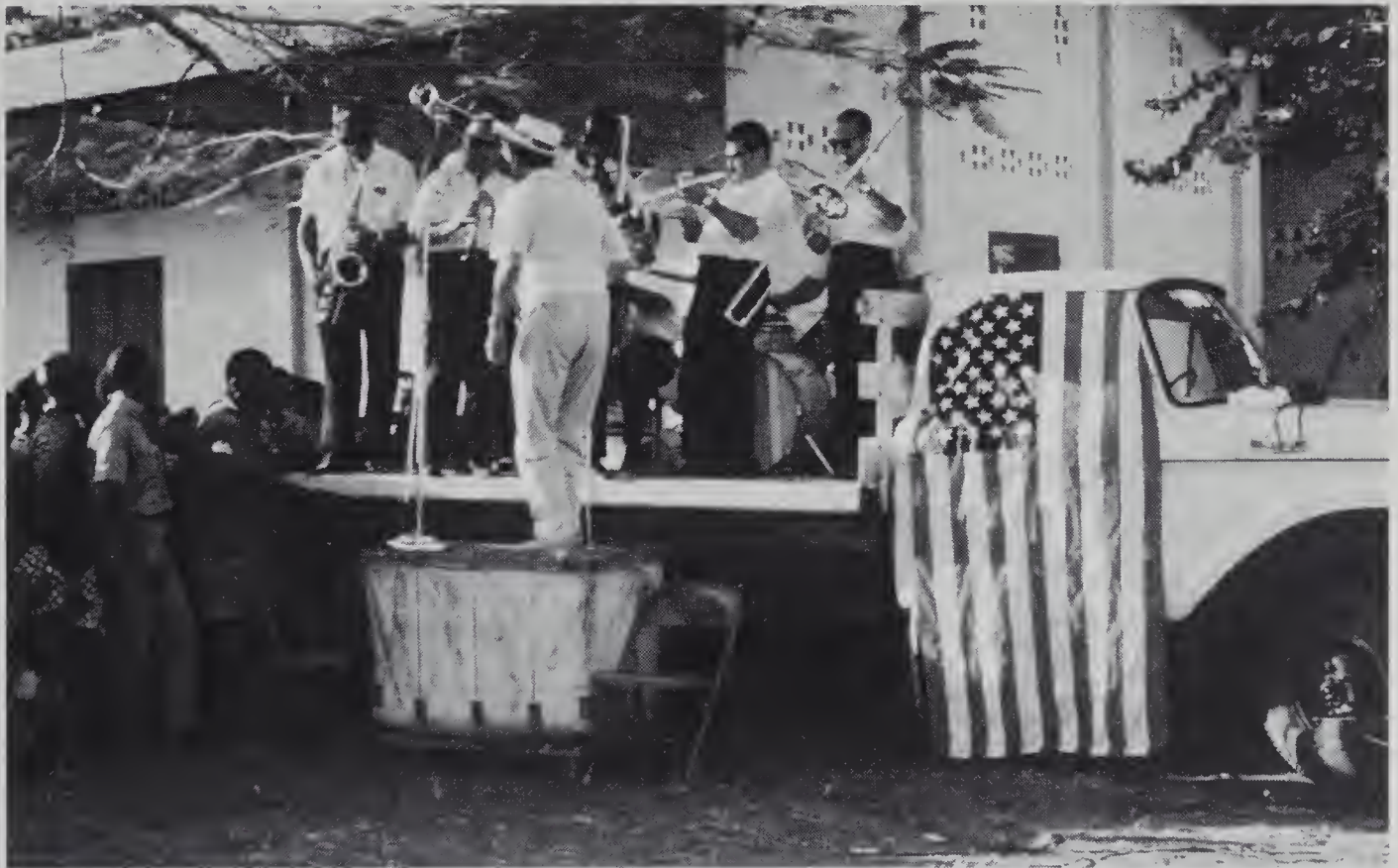
On the second to last concert we played before we left, the first trumpet player, I forget his name, had a few words with Paul Taubman, who fired the trumpet player on the spot. Paulie Cohen was hired to take over the first trumpet chair, for Paulie was a good lead player but proudly carried the mantle of having been fired by every band leader he played for. Somehow Paulie and Taubman survived the trip without incident. (Paulie Cohen was the first and perhaps only white lead trumpet player to play with the Count Basie band.)

We started our tour by flying to Spain where we boarded a chartered plane for a short jump to Africa (for most of the trip we flew on a chartered Ethiopian Airlines plane). We landed in Dakar, Senegal, where the concert tour began (Dakar is the western most point in West Africa, the place where many African slaves were put aboard ships for America). On the third day in Dakar four of us, including me, came down with ptomaine poisoning. Everyone took turns at being ill during the time in West Africa. We were told, of course, not to eat anything uncooked in West Africa, which wasn't as easy as it sounds. Baskets of bread, the long thin baguettes, were left at the entrance to the restaurants, every morning. Once, I looked in a restaurant kitchen and could see the custom of someone holding the bread over an open fire before the bread was served. You never knew how many times the unwrapped bread had been handled. I probably ate a piece of

bread that hadn't been exposed to enough fire. Fortunately, the first day of my sickness was on a day with no concert.

I felt well enough to play on the following day, and then one of the two French horn players was ill. We were playing a transcription of one of the movements from Tchaikovsky's *Fourth Symphony* that included a fanfare-like section that the French horns play in octaves, a very dramatic musical moment. Without the second horn the music was going to sound empty. I covered for the missing player by transposing the second French horn part on trombone. Other musicians covered for their indisposed colleagues.

After a few weeks in Africa when our digestive systems were OK we noticed that our concerts were primarily for government dignitaries, embassy people and paying audiences. It was the 1960s and most of the musicians were under 35 and we complained that only a few of our concerts were for the general public. As a result extra concerts were scheduled that called for lower ticket prices or for free admission. Most of the free concerts took place in soccer stadiums.



**Washed out roads kept the entire band from performing at a West African location. A flat-back truck served as a stage as we improvised some music.**

We were in Northern Rhodesia when it gained its independence from Great Britain and became Zambia. This historic event, a country gaining independence and changing its name was something to



remember. On that Independence Day Zambia played Ghana in a soccer match—soccer is very popular in Africa—and we played at halftime. Later we were given a tour through a copper mine where I picked up a piece of slag that resembles a city skyline.<sup>1</sup>

Postage stamps with the new name of Zambia were issued while we were there. I was first in line at the post office to purchase the new stamps, affix them to a special envelope and have them canceled on the first day of issue as first day covers. The employee was probably sleepy from celebrating the previous night and misread the hand stamping device. He saw the inverted “9” as a “6” and somehow mistook a “1” for a “4” and stamped the date as 1991 rather than 1964, the correct date. When the postal employee stamped the envelopes for the next person he saw his mistake and called me back. I had already turned into the L-shaped passageway, out of his sight and left with my first day cover error.

I took a few hundred photographic color slides on the trip. We saw a lot in each country because there was enough free time and most of us took advantage of every hour. As soon as we arrived in a country we dropped our bags in the hotel room, grabbed our cameras and ran. Unfortunately for them, there were two or three musicians who spent their free time in Africa sitting in the hotel bar.

In every country we were paid in the local currency. However, someone from the U.S. State Department was there with American dollars if we wanted to exchange the local currency for U.S. dollars. Most of us had arranged to have a portion of our salary placed in our personal bank accounts, so, we just took enough money for incidentals. We were always paid in fresh local bills directly from the bank. I should have brought my entire salary back in the notes from those countries. All the countries we visited have changed their paper money four to six times since I was there. Now, notes that had a face value of a few dollars, or less, are worth hundreds of dollars. At that time I was collecting coins, I had yet to develop a serious interest in collectible paper money.

There were Indian moneychangers who changed currency for tourists. I soon discovered they were the best sources to find interesting obsolete coins. Each moneychanger had a miscellaneous bowl where he put coins that had accumulated over decades, coins that no one wanted. In each city at the earliest opportunity

I located the moneychangers and asked to look through their miscellaneous bowl of coins. I found many collectible coins that the moneychangers were glad to sell, usually at silver content value, which was most satisfactory. I found numerous 19th century coins from many different countries. By visiting these shops in East Africa I was able to put together a complete set of ¼-rupee coins from German East Africa (Germany “possessed” this region, now Tanzania, from 1891 until World War I). I passed over many collectible coins simply because of the weight. At a jewelry shop in Morocco I found large silver coins, called crowns in the collecting world, from Belgium, France, Germany and other countries. Once again, I paid the equivalent of the current price of silver for them, a bargain. The weight of these coins became more than I wanted to carry in my luggage. So I made three parcels and asked two friends to carry what was too much for me to handle.

In total we visited eighteen countries on our African tour. After traveling through most of French West Africa we went to the Belgian Congo, later called Zaire and now the Democratic Republic of Congo. When we performed in Leopoldville, now Kinshasa, and Stanleyville, now Kisangani, you could see the bullet holes in buildings from the revolution that had just ended. You could hear some gunshots way out in the bush, because there were rebels holding out, but in the cities all was calm.

Moise Tshombe, who had led the revolt that led to the secession of Katanga Province from the Belgian Congo, attended our concert in Leopoldville. After Katanga rejoined the Belgian Congo, and to the surprise of many, Tshombe was recalled from exile to lead the country. He entered the sweltering and humid non-air-conditioned building with a few bodyguards and sat in the first row about twenty feet from me. We started each concert in darkness as the conductor, with a pen light in hand, entered through the center isle of the audience as a drum roll increased in volume. As the conductor reached the bandstand the lights came up and as he stepped on the podium we played the national anthem of the host country and then ours.

On this occasion as the lights were lowered I noticed the eyes of Tshombe dart nervously to the left and right. Dimming of lights with a controversial leader in the audience was not a good idea, in my opinion. This could have been a perfect opportunity to do harm



to the African leader. Needless to say I was also concerned for my safety and that of my colleagues. I held my breath and Tshombe looked relieved when the hall was illuminated again. I was relieved as well.

We performed in Ft. Lamy, Chad where a memorable demonstration took place. As representatives of the United States, representatives of tribes from areas near and away from Ft. Lamy came to pay homage. Robed tribal leaders rode on horses that were decorated with colorful coverings. In an area the size of a football field, each tribe, consisting of at least 50 people, occupied a space of about 75 to 100 feet in width. Simultaneously, the dancers and musicians of each tribe performed. We were told to walk around to acknowledge each group. In a matter of minutes the dust raised by the dancers was so thick we had difficulty seeing very much and held handkerchiefs over our noses and tried to keep the dust out of our eyes. The din of the music from 25 or more tribal groups of musicians intruded on the group we were listening to at the time. It was organized chaos. After about two hours the tribes departed in a huge cloud of dust.

After a few days in the Belgian Congo and Zambia, we continued into the English-speaking portion of Africa: Nigeria, Malawi, Uganda and Kenya. It was much different there, especially the appearance of the buildings in cities, much of which were painted white and resembled modest buildings in Great Britain. In French West Africa, which still had the appearance of the early days of French colonialism and where we were uncertain about cleanliness most of the buildings had a dull appearance. But in English speaking East Africa it was almost like being somewhere in the Midwestern part of the U.S. While we were in Nairobi, Kenya on a day off, five of us rented a Land Rover and a guide who drove the vehicle (similar to a Jeep with an open top so we could stand up). The guide took us to Ambicelli, a game reserve about two hours south of Nairobi. We left around 4 o'clock in the morning so that we could get to our destination at sunrise. That day we saw just about every kind of indigenous animal from that region. When we arrived we saw giraffe all over the landscape with their necks up in the trees, eating. As the daylight increased we saw other animals. We were within ten feet of a lion. Of course, we were inside the Land Rover, but we took some close-up shots of everything including an elephant. It was quite an

experience. We could see snow-capped Mt. Kilimanjaro from the open country reserve that extended for miles. And we came across some Massai Tribesmen, the tall slender people who wear a wrap-around piece of cloth. These natives usually put red clay in their hair and on their faces. We stopped and took some pictures, stopped for lunch at a lodge for tourists, and then went looking for elephants.

We then resumed our search for elephants, and the guide soon found tracks. He stopped as close as he thought he should. We sat there and took lots of photographs. All of a sudden a large a large bull elephant decided we were too close and charged the Land Rover, which the guide had trouble starting. When the elephant couldn't have been more than ten feet away, the engine turned over and the driver backed away as fast as he could. This experience was so frightening that I lost my voice for about an hour.

From Nairobi we were scheduled to go to Mombasa, located on the coast of the Indian Ocean about 250 miles from Nairobi. But an anti-American disturbance kept us from going there. This was disappointing because I wanted to travel by train, the part of the railroad that was built 1895-1903. During construction it became known as the route of *The Lunatic Express*.<sup>2</sup> This 572-page book is a vivid and disturbing account of the difficulty of those who built this railway into the interior of Africa. This Arab area under the rule of the Sultan of Zanzibar became part of British East Africa in 1887. Nevertheless, Mombasa issued its own coinage from 1888-1890 and I wanted to look for examples. In addition, like Zanzibar, just the sound of the name Mombasa was exotic, and I wanted to go there.

One of next stops was Rhodesia, once Southern Rhodesia. When there, our tuba player, John Buckingham, one of two blacks in the band, and I went sight-seeing one day. Thirsty, we stopped in a restaurant to get something to drink. The waitress said she wouldn't serve him because he was black and I said, "If you won't serve him, I don't want to be served," and we walked out. Sharing a border with South Africa, the radical white government in Rhodesia also shared the racist policy of their neighbor. What was happening in the south of the United States in the 1960s was also happening southern Africa.

During our three-month tour, we spent anywhere from two to four days in each location. From Dar es Salaam in Tanganyika, now Tanzania, we went to Zanzibar, the tiny island about 26 miles off



the east coast of Africa. Zanzibar is now part of Tanzania, but until that time it had been an independent state and there had been a revolution there about six months before we arrived. Arabs, the minority, had been killed by black Africans with Castro beards and Che (Guevara) berets. The new black government was being sorted out while we were there. (Zanzibar was called the Cuba of East Africa.) There was an anti-American feeling that prevailed following the revolution, so we were not certain if we were going until the night before. Even though we had been scheduled in advance, we didn't receive approval until 7:30 the night before we were to depart. The next morning we arose at 4:30 and boarded the plane about 7:00 for the short flight to the main island of Zanzibar.

It sounds foolishly romantic, nevertheless, as the plane swooped down from the sky I swear I could hear the ascending sound of violins that suggest a cool trade wind and the oboe that creates a haunting Arabic atmosphere in Jacques Ibert's *Escales* (Ports of Call). Zanzibar was one of those mysterious places that I had often thought about and now I was there. It was just as described by Ethel Younghusband. "Zanzibar Island from the sea is very pretty," she wrote, "with its rich vegetation and little bays of gloriously coloured water, sometimes a vivid green, other times a dark azure, eating into the land. Tall coconut trees stand up high, with their fringe of leaves silhouetted against the sky; then huge mango trees, dark and dense, throwing underneath a gloomy shade."<sup>3</sup>

The reason for our trip to Africa could have been a demonstration that Americans wanted only friendship. The 1960s was the decade of independence for many African nations. Oil, diamonds, copper and iron were just a few resources that interested China and the Soviet Union, who were competing for influence in what was once called the Dark Continent. One year after we performed in Zanzibar, Chou-en-Lai visited the new union of Tanzania (Tanganyika, Zanzibar and Pemba).

At every other stop there was always an official from the local government to greet us, but in Zanzibar there was no one except the representative from the U.S. State Department. We strolled through the city and went through the market or the Kasbah, where I looked for the elusive coins from Zanzibar when it was a British Protectorate: I had no luck, so we went to the place where slave

auctions were held. We also learned that Zanzibar was the most important embarkation place into Africa for explorers.

Burton, Speke, Stanley and Livingstone, they all went there first to get their supplies before they ventured into unexplored Africa. We gave an afternoon public concert in a park in Zanzibar, and then flew back to Dar es Salaam and on to the Malagasy Republic, now called Madagascar. Our performances there took place four years after independence was granted. The colorful countryside against the red clay earth reminded me of a Gauguin painting. The people were amicable but in spite of the French influence, I do not recall any memorable meals.

Somalia was the next stop. The people were friendly as we walked through Mogadishu, the capital and purchased souvenirs. I bought a pair of antelope horns from a boy on the street and paid the equivalent of 50 cents. Just a few blocks from the hotel was a camel market. Years later I learned that Somalia has more camels than any other place on earth. As I remember we had some good meals in Mogadishu, some influenced by the Italian occupation in the 1940s.

On the day we were scheduled to leave Mogadishu we were told to remain in the hotel because it may not be safe to go outside due to possible anti-American demonstrations reported by our State Department. We packed our bags and waited for at least two hours before we finally received a call to come to the lobby, where we waited for another hour until the bus came. We boarded the bus as quickly as possible. The bus went straight to the airport, and drove onto the airfield next to the plane, bypassing customs procedures. (I assume the State Department representative had arranged this.) We boarded the plane, which had been loaded with our equipment while we waited in the hotel. Within minutes the plane took off and that was the last we saw of Somalia. It was almost like a scene in a movie. Clan rivalry and a bankrupt government caused Somalia to implode in the late 1980s. So, with the total destruction of the beautiful city of Mogadishu, I was fortunate to have seen it before this catastrophe.

There were also political disturbances elsewhere, including the Sudan, where we were scheduled to go next. Consequently these concerts, the last stops on our itinerary were canceled. We returned to Nairobi where we remained for a few days waiting for the State



Department officials to decide where to send us next. While we waited in Nairobi we performed a couple of concerts before the State Department sent us to Morocco, where the tour ended, after a trip of at least 5000 miles from Nairobi to Morocco. That was an interesting trip because we had to refuel in Chad, the absolute hottest place I have ever been in my life. The temperature was over 120 degrees. The airport consisted of one small building with no air conditioning. We all ran to the shady side of building.

We spent four or five days in Morocco, where we played concerts in Rabat, and another city or two. In most of Africa water is extremely important for man, beast and crops. In Rabat there were men in colorful clothing with water containers on their backs. For a few coins you could have a cup of water from the one communal cup each water carrier had. No thanks!

At the end of the tour most of the musicians returned to New York City. I, however, had arranged to go to Europe and spend a week or two in Rome with Ralph Ferraro, a drummer and his wife Mannie. Ralph had been in the navy with my brother Jack, and Ralph and I had shared an apartment on West 71st Street in New York City before he moved to Rome. He worked as a drummer and later as a composer in the recording industry in Rome for at least fifteen years before moving to Los Angeles, to continue his career as a composer.

I had prepared for this side trip by studying Italian with a tutor, albeit an amateur one. Before leaving for the African trip, while playing in the pit at *How to Succeed in Business*, I studied Italian with the pit orchestra's harpist, Susan dell Aquilla, who spoke Italian fluently. After the Wednesday matinee, Susan and I remained in the pit and she instructed me in conversational Italian. Over a period of six or eight weeks I felt comfortable enough to ask directions, order food and get along generally as a tourist. My Italian pulled me through without too much difficulty. On a train I was speaking with a banker. He said in Italian, "you have the most beautiful Florentine accent." When I spoke I simply mimicked my teacher.

I also made use of my Italian during a trip to Venice, from which I visited the islands of Murano and Burano, about twenty minutes from the city by motor launch. Murano is known for its glass products, and I spent a good portion of the day watching the glass makers blow and mold molten glass into exquisite forms. When it came time

to return I asked an Italian priest where the boat stopped to return to the mainland. His reply came in rapid fire Italian. I asked him, in Italian to please speak slower. I guess it sounded to him as though I spoke the language. Musicians seem to be able to imitate word sounds, especially in Italian because the language is so lyrical.

After the African tour and my trip to Italy I returned to my pad on East 53rd Street and the pit at *How to Succeed* to finish the last few months of the show. After the show closed, Milt Green, called me to do the substitutes in *Fiddler on the Roof*, the show I rejected in favor of the African tour. I agreed to substitute in the show (where there was a girl in the chorus who was just another singer at the time, who became famous as Bette Midler), and while substituting in the show I renewed my acquaintance with Spence Sinatra, an extremely talented tenor saxophonist and flutist in the pit at *Fiddler*. (I had met Spence when he and I played with Woody Herman in 1955.) While at *Fiddler*, Spence also studied art and he filled his non-playing dialogue time by sketching musicians in the pit and members in the audience. Most often Spence came to the theatre with his blue suit covered with colored charcoal. As most artists, Spence was obsessed with drawing and sketched whenever he didn't have his flute in his hands. He was ambidextrous and scared everyone when he drew two different parts of the human face at one time using both hands. (Spence met an untimely death; he fell, jumped or was pushed from the roof of his building in lower Manhattan.)

A few colleagues and I came together each week to play chamber music sessions for our own pleasure. This select group of trombonists included Jim Thompson, Wayne Andre (d. Aug. 26, 2003), Tony Strupcewski (Studd), Gordon Pulis, (on occasion Jack Gale joined us) and me. Most often at least four of us were available on a designated afternoon. Gordon, who was older, was a legend. He played 1st trombone with the New York Philharmonic and later at the Metropolitan Opera. Nevertheless, he never lost his enthusiasm to play for enjoyment. Gordon had a drinking problem and it was the reason for his unfortunate decline as a trombonist. In addition to published music, each of us contributed by arranging or transcribing music. I arranged *You Leave Me Breathless*, a lovely ballad, and transcribed a piano etude by Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915) and other pieces for four trombones.



After the African tour I continued to reside at the southeast corner of East 53rd St. and Lexington Avenue in New York City. I shared this six-room apartment with two other musicians, Art DeCenzo and Ron Byrnside, both of whom received their B.M. degrees in composition from the Cincinnati Conservatory. Art had a beautiful hand for copying music and aligned himself with a copying service operated by Wedo Marasco at 49th Street and Broadway. There was plenty of music to copy each day for recordings, concerts, Broadway and television shows and night club acts in New York. The individual music parts for these and other venues probably could be measured in tons of paper and hundreds and hundreds of gallons of ink. Here is a bit of trivia. Wedo was also a musician, an oboist; he said his sole claim to fame was his playing the oboe solo on Vaughn Monroe's hit record *Dance Ballerina Dance*.

When Ron Byrnside came to New York after receiving his PhD in music composition from Yale, he joined Art as a copyist at Wedo's before moving to Emile Charlap's copying service on West 48th Street between Broadway and 8th Avenue. After a few years of copying other people's music Ron accepted a teaching position at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia where he could return to composing.

I filled my non-play time with a variety of activities. Once when my brother Jack and his family visited me on 53rd Street, I took them to F.A.O. Schwartz, the world-famous toy store on 5th Avenue near 59th Street and gave money to my niece and nephews to buy whatever they wanted. They had never seen a toy store like this. My niece Jody (Stenersen), an artist, purchased a book that she has kept all these years, an illustrated book that has given her artistic inspiration.

For a brief time I took some golf lessons in a building on Madison Avenue near 50th Street, a few blocks from my apartment. During these lessons I drove golf balls the lengthy interior of the golf studio into a screen that resembled a fairway. I also practiced on the roof of the 53rd Street apartment building by hitting a whiffle ball attached to about 20 feet of string anchored near my feet. People in the thirty-plus story bank building across the street watched me as if I had lost my mind. But I gave the bank occupants something else to watch as well. I knew three flight attendants who often came to my apartment. On one of their visits one of them brought her bikini and she and I soaked up some sun on the roof.

While living at 138 E. 53rd Street I remember going to a concert at a museum a few blocks away at which Harry Partch, a California composer, performed with musicians he brought from California. Partch wrote music for instruments that he created. These were mostly percussion instruments including a giant marimba-like instrument. Quite a few New York musicians and composers, including Gil Evans came to the concert. (Evans, who was always open to new music wrote lovely arrangements and some that were among the first be bop flavored for Claude Thornhill in the 1940s.)

This 53rd Street location was perfect for me. The entrance to the subway was opposite the entrance to the building. I could leave the building and with no more than four or five paces enter the subway entrance. During inclement weather this was extremely convenient. However, most of the time I walked to wherever I was working: theaters, the Radio City Music Hall, concert halls and recording studios. At recording sessions there was an undeclared pecking order among musicians. Urbie Green was "the man" among trombonists (he has performed on hundreds of albums), and when I went to a studio I assumed Urbie would be there, so I would sit in the second or third chair unless the leader designated where we sat. Some trombone players would wait to see if Urbie walked in, if he didn't, there was some jockeying at times to sort out who would play the first part.

On short notice I played a recording date while living on East 53rd Street. I received a frantic call from the leader at a recording studio that was about ten blocks from where I lived. Martha Schlamme, recognized as the foremost interpreter of the vocal music of Kurt Weil, was finishing a recording date that didn't require a trombone. But at the last minute they decided to record an arrangement that did require a trombone. I was able to get to the studio in about fifteen minutes the date ended in another twenty minutes.

This episode struck me as amusing because Kurt Weil's *Three Penny Opera* ran for years and years in New York City. The small orchestra required just one trombone, and during this lengthy period about twenty different trombone players were in the pit at different times. I was not one of them.

For normal three-hour-recording sessions it was common to enter the studio having never seen many of the musicians before and



all of us were expected to sight read the music. At times the ink was barely dry on the music paper. It was not uncommon for the copyist to be in the studio finishing the music, and in three hours, or less, you've recorded four tunes. At the time, no more than four tunes could be recorded in a three-hour date. Most albums had eight tunes, so it took at least two record dates or six hours.

When I worked with Barney Rapp in Cincinnati in the 1940s he mentioned that the musicians that worked in New York were often so busy doing radio shows and recordings, they would send substitutes to play some rehearsals for them, indicating changes in the music with pencil. Then, the musicians would come in and sight-read the date: a radio show or a recording. At that time I could not comprehend how musicians could sight read music with no rehearsals. Twenty years later in New York City there were many times when I did that very thing and gained a modest reputation as a good sight-reader.

#### **Where I Was When....**

We usually remember where we were when historic incidents take place. I remember where I was the day that John F. Kennedy was killed. There was a little art gallery not too far from where I was living on East 53rd Street and Lexington Avenue. I wandered into this gallery and saw a Picasso lithograph that I liked. The price was about \$200. I considered purchasing it but thought I should investigate and see how many prints were made of the original painting. I went to the library at the Museum of Modern Art on West 53rd Street between 5th and 6th Avenues. After I was there for a while I heard voices murmuring that President Kennedy had been shot. I had just finished researching the lithograph—which ultimately I did not purchase—and went down to the street. I joined a crowd on 5th Avenue and watched subsequent events as they happened on television screens in a store window.

Out of respect for the president all the Broadway theaters were closed on that evening. Most of the musicians at *How to Succeed* identified with President Kennedy and our loss was registered on our faces when we returned to the theater. When Robert Kennedy was assassinated I was working at the Radio City Music Hall.

As a junior in high school I also remember where I was when Franklin Delano Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945. With other musicians I was about to leave for Indianapolis with Barney Rapp. We always met in front of the Wurlitzer Building on Fourth Street near Walnut Street in Cincinnati. As we were loading the cars the word spread on the street

that Roosevelt had died in Warm Springs, Georgia.

While I was working on Broadway I returned to the Manhattan School of Music for a semester to study choral conducting with Hugh Ross, conductor of the Schola Cantorum, one of New York's most prestigious choral groups. Thoughts about choral conducting at the college level were still in my head. The class met once or twice each week and the chorus we conducted consisted of members of the class. Ross expected conductors to give starting pitches to singers without the aid of a piano or any other instrument. If the pitch was within a major second, or two notes away from the actual pitch, he was satisfied, for classroom purpose. (Those with perfect pitch had no difficulty.) In the middle of the semester Ross invited me to join his Schola Cantorum. I was flattered, but I explained that as a working musician I couldn't guarantee that I would be available to sing in all scheduled concerts.

As I continued playing in the pit for *How to Succeed in Business* I decided to take classes at Columbia University Teachers College. Once again I was thinking about teaching at the college level and thought I might pursue a PhD in Music Education. With few exceptions most of those taking classes were teachers on sabbaticals pursuing advanced degrees. After one year and the negative attitude toward professional musicians by some of the instructors I realized that performing remained my true form of musical expression and didn't return for a second year.

While at Columbia, however, I was pleased (and surprised) one day to see Nigerian drummer Babatunde Olatunji in the hallway at Columbia University Teachers College. Dressed in a suit rather than his usual native robes, he could have been visiting, or perhaps lecturing as a guest. Known to musicians only as Olatunji (1927-2003), this Nigerian drummer, who graduated from Atlanta's Morehouse College in 1954 and studied at New York University organized a group of expatriate drummers and performers and recorded *Drums of Passion* and other albums. He was affiliated with a few musicians in the jazz world and performed at Birdland, but his West African music and chants belonged to the world of ethnomusicology not the jazz world. Nevertheless, he had an influence on some jazz musicians, but teaching West African music became his forte in the



United States.

For a brief period in the 1960s I temporarily lost confidence in my playing, as some musicians do at different times. This and a broken romance put me into a deep funk. It was at that time that a friend of mine who was contracting the extra musicians for the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra phoned. Some of the operas called for extra musicians that played on stage or just off the stage. I don't remember the name of the opera, but it called for a military band that was located off stage and the instrumentation included a baritone horn. A baritone horn looks like a miniature tuba, but it has the same range as a trombone, and a lot of trombone players also play baritone horn. I never learned to play one, though I knew the relationship between the three valves and the slide positions on my instrument. But to manipulate the valves without thinking about it was something else. My friend hired me to play baritone horn and said there was a week before the first performance, so I said yes, with reservations.

I borrowed a baritone horn and started practicing and became acquainted enough with the instrument that I figured I could handle the part. The rehearsal came and I handled the part all right. However, at the performances the tempo was faster and I was playing just on the edge of my technical ability. If the conductor would have conducted the music any faster, I would have been in serious trouble. My fingers and my mind were not completely compatible with a baritone horn.

Shortly after that, while still in the funk, the Bolshoi Ballet came to town. The company used musicians from New York and needed somebody to substitute for a couple of nights and the same friend who called me for the Met called me to substitute in the ballet orchestra. For at least ten minutes I proceeded to tell him all the reasons why I didn't think I could handle it. When I finally finished the one-sided conversation, he said, "I'll see you tomorrow evening at 8:00" and hung up the phone. I arranged for a substitute to cover for me at the show I was playing. On the following evening I went to the (old) Metropolitan Opera house where the ballet was performing and sight-read the music, with some of the dynamics and other musical directions written in Russian (Cyrillic), rather than the universal Italian. Under a circumstance like this, one must

watch the conductor closely and be perceptive to what the other brass players were doing. I was so busy listening and watching that I guess I completely forgot about my imagined inadequacy and my automatic pilot took over. Dame Margo Fontaine was the guest and featured dancer and she danced beautifully. At the time she was about 44; in ballet years an age that is almost considered ancient.

**Cincinnati Symphony Tour  
(July 25 – October 9, 1966)**

In the spring of 1966 I received a telephone call from my former teacher, Ernest Glover, who played with the Cincinnati Symphony. He said the U.S. Department of State was sending the Cincinnati Symphony on a world tour, and as all orchestras do on international tours, that it would take a few extra musicians—trumpet, trombone, French horn and a few extra string players—in case some musicians might be indisposed and required a substitute. (Extra musicians are usually on stage during each concert to give the principle player some occasional relief or to double or play along to reinforce a dramatic section.) When asked if I was interested I said yes! When the Cincinnati Orchestra came to New York a few months later I played alone and with the trombone section for Max Rudolph, the conductor. In August I went to Cincinnati and rehearsed with the orchestra for a week or so, and then after a concert or two in Cincinnati we flew to Greece to begin the tour. The color slides, and some black and white photos that I took, document some of the places where we played. A photographer accompanied us on the tour; consequently there are photographs of the orchestra in the archives of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. (My roommate on this tour was Jessie Ceci, former Boston Symphony Orchestra violinist, whom I had met at Tanglewood in 1956. Jessie was an extra musician for the tour as I was.)

The repertoire consisted of the following. Bartok: *Dance Suite*; Beethoven: *Eroica Symphony*, *Prometheus Suite*, *Violin Concerto* and *Piano Concerto No. 2*; Berlioz: *Roman Carnival Overture*; Brahms: *Symphony No. 4* and *Piano Concerto No. 1*; Creston: *Symphony No. 2*; Dvořák: *New World Symphony* and *Slavonic Dance in C*; Gershwin: *American in Paris* and *Piano Concerto*; Haydn: *Symphony No. 93*; Mennin: *Canto for Orchestra*; Mozart: *Symphony No. 28*; Mussorgsky:



*Pictures at an Exhibition*; Nielson: *Symphony No. 4*; Papaioannou: *Symphony No. 5*; Prokofieff: *Piano Concerto No. 2*; Nelson: *This is the Orchestra*; W. Schuman: *New England Triptych*; R. Straus: *Don Juan* and *Till Eulenspiegel*; J. Strauss: *Annen Polka* and *Tritsch-Trasch Polka*; Stravinsky: *Firebird Suite*; Sousa: *Stars and Stripes Forever*; Tchaikovsky: *Symphony No. 6* and *Piano Concerto No. 1*; Wagner: *Prelude and Liebestod from Tristan and Isolde* and *Prelude to Act III from Lohengrin*. Pianist Lorin Hollander was the soloist on the tour.

We arrived in Athens in late afternoon, and after checking into the hotel and unpacking there was little time to find a restaurant for dinner, so most of us ate in the hotel restaurant. The food was fair, typical of many hotel restaurants. As we moved to the outside to board the buses that would take us to the concert, one of my friends, in all seriousness said “what I wouldn’t give for a [Cincinnati] Frisch’s Big Boy” [sandwich]. I and a few others laughed. We were beginning a sixty-eight-day trip around the world with opportunities to taste many different ethnic foods and already one person missed the American hamburger. By the end of the trip I can say that the best food I had on the entire trip was in Hong Kong and Japan.

The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra became the first American symphony orchestra to circle the earth (the tour covered 33,000 miles). We performed forty-two concerts in Greece,<sup>4</sup> Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Yugoslavia, Switzerland, India, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Philippines, Taiwan, Okinawa, Japan and South Korea. In the Imperial Roman ruins in Baalbeck, Lebanon, surrounded by temples, the CSO was included in the 1966 International Festival in Baalbeck. Commemorative postage stamps were issued in Lebanon for this event. As I remember, the outdoor location, though smaller, resembled the Coliseum in Rome. Before the performance we unpacked our instruments and prepared for the concert below the stage in an area with alcoves that looked as though they might have once held lions before gladiatorial events. On the program was Mussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition*, and my friend and colleague Gene Blee, the principal trumpeter, played the opening and recurring solo as I have never heard it played before. It was brilliant.

In the depths of the ruins at Baalbeck some local males hung around the orchestra. With a pocket knife they carved figures in a local stone that was soft enough for the knives to penetrate. For the

equivalent of a dollar or less one artist carved a fish and the head of a bird for me.

One of the most picturesque locations where the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra performed was Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, now part of Croatia. We performed in the town square of this walled city on the Adriatic Sea, where I swam. The water was so salty that one could float effortlessly. I remember seeing in Dubrovnik a marker on a shop documenting it as the oldest functioning apothecary in Europe. The date was about 1300, as I remember. During the war in the 1990s I heard that this building had been destroyed.

When we arrived in Bombay (now Mumbai), India at 2:00 a.m. it was as if someone opened a door to an oven when we exited the airplane. All of us knew the heat would be worse ten hours later, and it was. All the way to the hotel we saw hundreds and hundreds of sleeping bodies on the sidewalks.

Returning from a rehearsal in Bombay, I saw a snake charmer, a common sight on the streets. A famous photograph of Dizzy Gillespie charming a snake on a street in India during another U.S. State Depart tour prompted me to do the same. I stopped, put my instrument together, crouched down opposite the cobra and duplicated the Dizzy Gillespie stunt. Double-bassist Frank Proto took a picture of this, a picture I do not have.

We stayed at the Taj Mahal Hotel and from my hotel window each morning I saw Indians bathing in the bay of the Arabian Sea, just a few hundred feet away. This hotel, like the Raffles in Singapore, was a classic design so typical of the Victorian British Empire period. The rooms were huge with high ceilings and rotating fans. The bathroom was as large as the bedroom in some of my New York apartments.

The orchestra members took a train that ran through the jungle from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to Singapore, a wonderful journey that took a couple of hours. With some 1940 movies in memory, I subconsciously expected to see Sidney Greenstreet and Humphrey Bogart enter the bar at the Raffles Hotel in Singapore.

We performed in the Philippines and the humidity in Manila was so severe that clothing we washed before going to bed was not dry by the next morning. I remember packing damp socks and underwear as we left. The weather was better in Turkey, where I visited Istanbul's famous Blue Mosque, a truly beautiful building.





**This alternate picture shows the Bombay snake charmer with his hand on the cobra, which struck twice at my slide.**

It was once a Catholic Church, then a mosque and now a museum, though still used for prayers [I saw people praying]. The *Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra Centennial Portraits* (1994) documents the history of the CSO including the 1964 tour.

The CSO Jazz Quintet had its birth during this tour. Drummer Dave Frerichs, bassist Frank Proto and I would find a corner back stage in a concert hall and jam; then trumpeter Marie Speziale joined us. Later, when I returned to New York, trombonist Paul Piller joined the orchestra, Bob Bradley played bass and Frank Proto moved to piano for the official CSO Jazz Quintet; they recorded at least two albums.

The orchestra personnel and countries visited on this tour are listed on a plaque that was installed in Music Hall in 1967. Looking through the airline tickets there is no listing for Israel, Lebanon, Turkey and Yugoslavia. We flew in and out of Cypress on route to and from countries that would not have allowed us to enter at the time because we came from or were going to Israel.

In Japan we performed Gershwin's *An American in Paris*, which calls for two saxophones, and the orchestra hired two local saxophonists to play the concert. Both were jazz players and they took me to a

sushi parlor after the concert. It was a small place and all eyes were on me, the only westerner there, as the waiter brought the fish to our table. I liked it, and my on-lookers smiled in appreciation. In addition to trying sushi in Japan, I also took a side trip to Kamakura to see the giant Buddha.

The last stop on the round the world tour was South Korea, and from there we flew to San Francisco. The orchestra's regular members flew directly back to Cincinnati; but a few other extra players and I had other plans. I stayed in San Francisco for about a week and spent some time with Rich Henry, a wonderful alto saxophonist and friend, who was working at the Fairmont Hotel. (I had met Rich on a gig in Lexington, Kentucky while I was in high school.) I rented a car and drove along the coast to see Big Sur. At the end of the week, I went to Cincinnati.



## Chapter XI

### New York and St. Louis, Music and Numismatics 1967-1996

AFTER A FEW months in Cincinnati, New York pulled me back. I moved in with trombonist and friend, Phil Jameson. (Phil is a member of the music faculty of the University of Georgia along with Fred Mills, friend, colleague and founding member of the Canadian Brass.) Phil lived on West 81st Street, just a hop, skip and jump to Zabars Delicatessen at the corner of 80th and Broadway, where it has been since 1934. With all the wonderful food items to purchase at this epicurean emporium, one might see anyone there—writers, actors, politicians and musicians. Within days of my return I began working again as a substitute in the orchestra at the Radio City Music Hall.

By this time my coin collecting hobby had developed into a serious interest in numismatics, which involves not only collecting but also the study of coins, paper money and related items. Those few coins that were left over from my first trip to Europe in the 1960s prompted me to collect American coins and soon thereafter coins from other countries. (Early on I pursued the coins issued by Great Britain and its colonies issued during the reign of King George III.) I purchased books and subscribed to some numismatic journals.

While performing in the pit at the *Music Man* a substitute musician saw me reading a numismatic journal during the short periods between tunes. He asked if I knew Lester Merkin, and I said no. A few weeks later another substitute asked the same question. I decided that I should meet Lester Merkin, who had been a professional musician in New York before he became a successful and respected coin and paper money dealer. His office was about three blocks from where I lived. We became very good friends and I often stopped in his office just to chat. Through Lester I became seriously interested in the history of coins and paper money. The number of visits to his office increased. I did some coin cataloging work for Lester and met some of the giants in the numismatic field including Walter Breen, John Ford and others who came to his office. I also suspect that my interest in music history was transferred to the history of numismatics. I had read about successful people who became interested in another subject that took them in another direction

and now I had become one of them.<sup>1</sup>

To repeat a previous statement, to hold a coin or piece of paper money from another time and perhaps another country is to hold history in your hands. In addition, to search for the source for the engraved artwork on a piece of paper money and the satisfaction of finding this source is extremely rewarding. Of course the subsequent step is to identify the engraver, which is not always easy to do, and ultimately make contact with the engraver if he or she is still living. For the first time in my adult life I was intrigued and perhaps somewhat obsessed with a subject that competed with my passion for music.

As a result I joined the American Numismatic Society (and am now an elected fellow),<sup>2</sup> the American Numismatic Association,<sup>3</sup> and other numismatic organizations and became more deeply involved in American and world coinage. In 1967 Lester Merkin told me of an opening for a curator at The Chase Manhattan Bank Money Museum. I had only been collecting for about five or six years and didn't think that or my brief study of numismatics qualified me for curatorship. Lester thought I had enough knowledge and recommended me for the position. He said what I didn't know I would learn on the job, and he was right. During the interview at the public relations office of the main branch of the bank in the Wall Street area there was a discussion about my beard, which I had then and have now. I was asked if I would remove the beard if requested and, respectfully, I said "No." A few days later I was hired—with the beard. Even though the museum was part of the bank I guess the public relations department figured I probably wouldn't offend regular customers. Now beards are common in the banking world.

Within days after I began working at The Chase Manhattan Bank Money Museum I found a Japanese sushi restaurant that served chirashi, my favorite raw fish dish. The taste for raw fish that I had acquired in Japan remained with me. I found a Japanese college student to teach me Japanese and I joined the Japan Society. I had difficulty with the language, but for a while was convinced that I should return to Japan, marry a Japanese woman, and live there. After a year or so, this romantic vision evaporated. However, I met some interesting people at the Japan Society, which had a library and held monthly meetings where speakers were invited to address



us. (I also found time to attend some peace rallies to express my feelings against the Vietnam War.)

Working nine to five at The Chase Manhattan Bank Money Museum was a complete turnaround after doing nothing but music until that time. I met Urbie Green, the busiest trombonist in New York City, and told him what I was going to do. He stared at me and said “You mean you’re going to take a real job?” Even though I was about to become a daytime person I told him that I was not leaving music. I would just be limited, for the most part, to nighttime work. At this time my friend Phil Jameson, with whom I shared an apartment had a friend who knew about an apartment on West 75th Street near Riverside Drive. With no hesitation I moved there because it was in my old neighborhood, close to midtown Manhattan.

The Chase Manhattan Bank traces its origin to 1799 when The Manhattan Company was chartered on April 2. There was a yellow fever epidemic in the 1790s and the need for delivering fresh water to New Yorkers was granted to The Manhattan Company headed by Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr. Without Hamilton’s knowledge Burr amended the bill creating the chartered corporation so that the Manhattan Company could use any capital stock not required for water distribution to be used “in the purchase of public stock or in any other monied transactions or operations not inconsistent with the Constitution and laws of the United States.”

As it turned out the company quickly accumulated excess capital and used it to open The Bank of the Manhattan Company on September 1, 1799. This was a blow to Hamilton and the Federalists because there were two Federalist banks in New York, the Bank of New York and a branch of the Bank of the United States. The establishment of a private bank was just one of the annoying moves by Burr that led to the Hamilton and Burr duel on July 11, 1804, and the death of Hamilton. (A plaque marks the location of this historic duel in Weehawken, New Jersey, which I often passed when I visited a friend who lived nearby.) New York City purchased the water works in 1808, which left the Manhattan Company exclusively in the banking business. It continued to operate under that name until 1955, when it merged with the Chase National Bank (est. 1877), a union that gave birth to The Chase Manhattan Bank.

In 1929 the Chase Bank started the Chase Bank Collection of Moneys

of the World, as it was initially called, after purchasing in 1928 the private collection of Farran Zerbe who had devoted forty years assembling his numismatic collection. The Chase then appointed Zerbe as curator of the money museum. He added material to the collection as did subsequent curators. Zerbe retired in 1939. Over the years the museum occupied three or four different addresses, the last at Rockefeller Center in the RCA Building on the Avenue of the Americas (6th Avenue) and 50th Street. The museum consisted of seventeen alcoves that were 6 feet long, 3½ feet deep and 6 feet 6 inches high. These alcoves occupied two rooms, and provided office space and vault space. The original 1929 collection consisted of 40,000 pieces. When I left there were about 75,000 pieces. The museum attracted about 150,000 visitors each year. During Easter and Christmas there were days when 750 to 1000 people came into the museum.

In addition to coins, paper money and medals that one would expect to see in a money museum, the Zerbe collection was eclectic and included primitive money from Africa, and the South Pacific as well as American Indian wampum. The collection also contained checks signed by every president of the United States, the John D. Rockefeller Jr. check for \$8,500,000 for the purchase of the land on which the United Nations building stands, and checks made out to and endorsed by famous Americans, including one by Charles Lindbergh and one by Helen Keller (in Braille). There were coins from ancient Greece and Rome, coins and paper money from other countries and rare pattern US coins. The collection of US coins was comprehensive and included one of the 15 known 1804 silver dollars. The US obsolete bank note collection, paper money issued by private banks and institutions (1782-1866), was extensive. The Federal paper money included numerous rarities including the first \$1 United States note dated 1862 with serial number 1. It had been presented to Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase. Among the pieces that I was able to add to the collection was a decadrachm from Syracuse (Sicily). This lovely coin, about the size of a US silver dollar, has the head of *Arethusa* surrounded by dolphins on the obverse and the *victorius quadriga*, or chariot with four horses on the reverse. This extraordinary Greek coin from about 400 B.C. is attributed to the designer Euaenetos. The auction price for this



coin in the early 1970s, when it was purchased for the collection, was \$1900. Today the value would be at least 15 times that figure. Overseeing this wonderful collection I gained a considerable amount of knowledge.

I worked at the museum Tuesday through Saturday but I continued to substitute in Broadway musicals, most often *1776*, a job secured for me by my friend Milt Green. Then I was offered a full-time position at the Radio City Music Hall, which was just across the street from the Money Museum. I accepted the job with the understanding that I could send a substitute on two afternoons each week. The Music Hall ran four shows each day at approximately noon, 3:00, 6:00 and 9:00 p.m. I worked two evenings and all day Saturday, Sunday and Monday. The stage shows varied according to the length of the movie. There were times when I played a show at lunch time and on occasion I was able to get away for the afternoon show. So, between my position at the Money Museum and working at the Music Hall, I was working seven days a week.

A particular show that ran for about six weeks at the Music Hall included a Korean dance group. I was infatuated with one of the dancers, even though she spoke little English. This group came back to New York at least twice, using the city as a base for tours in the U.S. I guess I was attracted to her because of her exotic beauty. After six months or so the relationship ran out of steam and finally came to an end.

A few years later I fell in love with Virginia, a ballerina in the Radio City Ballet; she was much younger than I. Virginia was not only beautiful, she was extremely intelligent, played piano and was a good cook. She and the other dancers worked four or five weeks with no time off and then had an entire week free. During that week she often came to my place and fixed dinner, or we had dinner at her apartment.

Virginia and I spent a lot of time together, and after the last show on Friday we usually went someplace to have a few drinks and perhaps listen to some music. A favorite place was near 40th Street and Madison Avenue. As I remember it was called *The Little Place Around the Corner*. Stringed-beads hung from ceiling to the floor creating a cubicle around each table, which established a romantic atmosphere. The pianist played all the good standard tunes and I

would quietly sing *Angel Eyes*, *It Could Happen to You* and other good tunes in Virginia's ear in between kisses and sips of daiquiris. We dated for a few years, but again, marriage didn't seem like the right thing for two independent people. (With this second opportunity to share my life with a loving, caring, intelligent, beautiful lady, and a few others along the way I accepted the fact that I was not intended for marriage.)

Another memorable dining place was the Café des Artistes at 1 West 67th Street, a few blocks from Lincoln Center. The walls of this French restaurant are decorated with wood nymphs painted by American illustrator Howard Candler Christy. (Magazines from the early 20th century included illustrations of attractive ladies called Christy girls.) The Café des Artistes was a special occasion restaurant where I and my date had escargot for the first time. Kissing someone with garlic on their breath is not romantic, unless one, meaning me, also had the same breath from the escargot. After dinner an eight block walk to the south to West 59th Street between 5th and 6th Avenues just off Central Park, took us to Rumplemeyers, the place for ice cream.

After I was at the museum about a year, a lawyer walked in and said that a client had died and the will stated that the curator of The Chase Manhattan Bank Money Museum was to catalog and evaluate his collection. This agreement probably had been made decades before I arrived. Part of the collection was in Bermuda, so I flew there for a few days to look at Spanish gold coins that were in a safe deposit box at the Bank of Bermuda. The remuneration for this cataloging assignment was more than satisfactory.

The museum vault was below ground in the Rockefeller Center branch of The Chase Manhattan Bank, at the east end of the RCA Building. Walking to and from the vault in the late afternoon I often saw Johnny Carson's guests arriving for the 6:00 p.m. taping of the *Tonight Show*, which originated from a studio in the RCA Building. Friends of mine played in the *Tonight Show* band so I attended some of the rehearsals. On one occasion Groucho Marx was substituting for Johnny Carson. During a break about six of the musicians and I gathered around Groucho who kept us in stitches with one joke or funny story in rapid succession.

Hurley's Bar and Grill, located on 49th Street and 6th Avenue, was



a popular watering hole for musicians from the Tonight Show band and I joined them for a drink on occasion. In 1963 I saw Irish writer Brendan Behan in Hurley's a few times. That was the year during a visit to New York City that he was banned from the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Later I read that he was invited to and marched in the Saint's Parade in Newark, New Jersey. In addition, he received the key to the city. This hard-drinking Irishman died the following year at 39. Behan seemed to be programmed to assume the position of his countryman Dylan Thomas, who died at 41 in 1954.

I also went to Cromwell's Drug Store on 50th Street next to the museum, which had a soda fountain where musicians and dancers from the Radio City Music Hall could grab a fast sandwich. In this general area one would often see performers from the Music Hall in heavy stage makeup. What might have caused curious looks on a street in Cincinnati was accepted as routine in this and the general theater district in New York City.

In the early 1970s when I was at the museum I was interviewed about the collection on the *Voice of America*, a program that was broadcast throughout the world, including in what was then called the Iron curtain countries. I also made four appearances on national television. I was interviewed twice on the *Today Show* in the early 1970s by Gene Shalit and High Downs. But missed two other opportunities to appear on that show because I had already booked a vacation trip to Scandinavia and I didn't want to cancel it. On the other occasion I was asked to speak about the accelerating price of gold and gold coins. I didn't feel totally comfortable with the subject so I declined.

My third appearance on national television was on *What's My Line* in 1972, a show hosted by Larry Blyden. Soupy Sales was one of the panelists and I interrupted the questioning to remind him that he actually knew me because I met him when he worked with my brother Jack at WKRC TV in Cincinnati. I am not certain but I think the other panelists were Arlene Francis and Gene Rayburn, and neither they nor Soupy could figure out that I was a money museum curator.

My fourth national television appearance was on a children's program, *Wonderama*. With a guard from The Chase Manhattan Bank at my side I took to the show a few examples from the collection, including a \$100,000 Federal Reserve note that was on loan to the





**Above: *Today Show* interview with host Hugh Downs. Right: An appearance on *What's My Line* with host Larry Blyden.** (Photos by William Devine and Ray Juskus)





museum from the U.S. Treasury Department. This denomination was once used for inter-bank transactions and could not be legally held by individuals. This high-denomination bank note had the attention of all the kids in the studio.

I also prepared publications while working at the Chase museum. In one instance a publisher asked me to compile two pocket paperback books, heavily illustrated, one on U.S. coins and one on U.S. paper money. With the wonderful collection to draw from, there was no problem illustrating these books. The original title was the *New Official Guide to United States Currency*, and the *New Official Guide to United States Coinage*. Later the title of each was changed to the *Standard Catalogue*. These books were not intended to be scholarly. They were intended for novice collectors and people with casual interest in the subjects. They sold for \$1 each, and the royalty was about eight- or ten-cents per copy with annual sales of about 50,000 of each. I updated these books annually for about four or five years.

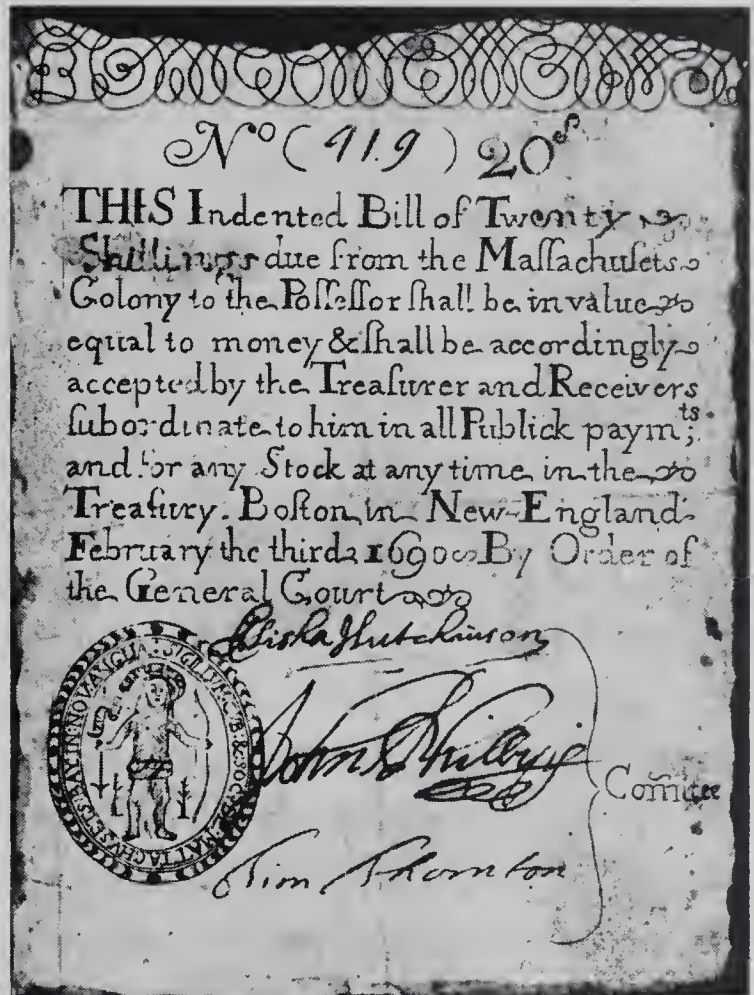
In 1972 a representative from Henry Regnery, a publisher in Chicago, came to the museum and asked if I could create a scholarly, comprehensive hard-cover book on U.S. paper money. I spent at least a year locating additional illustrations for this book, rare pieces the museum didn't have. Compiling data and finding illustrations was quite a task. I spent considerable time contacting some of the major collectors in the country, those who had rarities, some of these notes were unique. While working on this book Mark Davison, meteorologist for the *Today Show* and well-read numismatist, came to my office at least twice a week to chat with me about numismatics. (He left the studio at 9:00 a.m. just as the museum was opening.) I told him about the book I was preparing for Henry Regnery. Numismatics is a general term that covers coins, paper money, medals, tokens, etc. Mark suggested that I come up with a new word that would identify the study of paper money within the larger classification of numismatics, the study of all types of money but primarily defines the study of coins. I contacted the chairman of the Department of Classical Languages at Fordham University, the Rev. Richard Doyle and asked if he would help. A few weeks later he sent me his linguistic invention: syngraphics. The word comes from the Greek *syn*, meaning with or together (as in synagogue—a place

where people come together), and *graphikos*, which means to write. In Latin, *syngrapha* means a written agreement to pay, a promissory note, a bond. The *Oxford Dictionary* defines paper money as “a written promise to pay.” In the same source *syngraph* is defined “as a written contract or bond signed by both or all parties, an obligation or bond between two or more.” Handwritten goldsmith receipts that circulated in the 17th century are considered precursors of paper money in the western world.

The art of engraving, etching and other methods by which copies of an original design are printed from a plate, block or the like is referred to as graphic art. Modern bank notes are no longer handwritten but are made from engraved plates. Consequently, *syngraphics* is interpreted as the collecting of paper money, and since a serious collector studies what is collected, he or she is a *syngraphist*. With the publication of the first edition of the *Comprehensive Catalog of U.S. Paper Money* in 1974, *syngraphics* was introduced to the world.

The first paper money was issued in China by the Tang Dynasty (618-907). The Stockholms Bank, a private bank in Sweden issued paper money in 1666. However, the first government paper money to be issued in the western world was a bill of credit from Massachusetts in 1690, four years before the Bank of England was established.

While researching material for my *Comprehensive Catalog of U.S. Paper Money* I met many of the important and scholarly numismatic people, including, Eric P. Newman, Abe Kosoff, William P. Donlon, Neil Shafer and others. A few years later I met and became friends with Matt Rothert, who is responsible for getting legislation



**This bill of credit for 20 shillings was issued in 1690 by the Massachusetts Colony.** (Courtesy Smithsonian Institution Numismatics Collections)



passed that placed *In God We Trust* on American paper money. The national motto has been on American coinage since 1864, however it took Matt, a collector from Arkansas, and Senator Fulbright and Representatives Bennet and Harris to have the motto placed on paper money. The bill was approved by President Eisenhower on July 11, 1955. (Matt's daughter is Hope Taft, the wife of former Ohio Governor Robert Taft.)

One of the most colorful numismatic personalities I met while preparing this book was Amon Carter, Jr., the owner of the *Ft. Worth Star and Telegram*, part owner of the Texas Rangers and adopted son of the founder of the Amon Carter Museum in Ft. Worth. Amon had numerous rarities in his coin and paper money collection. I called him, introduced myself and told him about my book project. He had about eight rare notes that I needed to photograph. Amon, who was on the board of American Airlines, said he would be in New York the following week for a meeting and would bring the notes. I met him at 8:00 a.m. at his hotel and he said he would stop at the museum on the way to the airport about 2:00 p.m.

After I photographed the notes the day progressed as I fulfilled my duties until 2:00, when Amon was to arrive. About 2:30, in the midst of New York traffic a cab stopped in front of the museum, where no parking was permitted. Amon jumped out and ran toward the entrance as I ran to meet him. He grabbed the envelope that contained the notes worth a small fortune, I thanked him and he was gone.

Despite all his wealth, Amon always seemed like "one of the guys," and he loved to attend the major numismatic shows and purchase table space along with coin and paper money dealers, where he displayed some of his rarities with no intention of selling them. He just wanted to be "part of the scene" and talk about coins and bank notes, though he sold his duplicates to interested collectors. Amon died in the 1970s. He had a heart attack while driving in Ft. Worth but was able to park his car on the shoulder of the highway. I heard this sad news while I was in London visiting a numismatist friend, also a friend of Amon's.

One source vital to the preparation of the book was the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington, DC. Over the years I visited the Bureau at least fifteen times to research paper money for various

projects. I also made visits to the National Archives, the Smithsonian Institution and the Bureau of the Public Debt. Nonetheless, I completed the book in two years and the first edition of the *Comprehensive Catalog* appeared in 1974 and is now in its seventh edition (2006). With some data provided by the late Walter Breen, I was able to show how many notes were printed or issued for specific issues and denominations in the latter 19th century. For the first time notes were attributed to individual designers and engravers, information I found at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

My first visit to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing took place about 1970, when James Conlon was the director. (I also met and befriended Conlon's six successors.) Conlon wrote the introduction to the first edition of my *U.S. Essay, Proof and Specimen Notes*, a specialized book of notes that "might have been," note designs that were rejected. Director of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Robert Leuver wrote the foreword to the fifth edition of the *Comprehensive Catalog* and Thomas R. Hipschen, chief engraver at the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing wrote the foreword to the sixth edition. My research at the Bureau was in the Engraving Division, where I became a familiar face to those who helped me. (Security was always tight at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, however, after September 11, 2001 gaining entry required additional security clearance.)

As curator of The Chase Manhattan Bank Money Museum I received requests to speak to a variety of organizations, but with no speaking experience I found excuses to decline. Then a request came through the bank that, though I tried, I couldn't refuse. I spoke at a monthly meeting of the wives of members of the United Nations. The lecture went well and I discovered that I enjoyed public speaking consequently, I accepted most subsequent invitations.

One of them came from the Smithsonian Institution, which held four-day seminars on a variety of subjects and invited specialized speakers. I was one of the speakers for the 1989 numismatic seminar, *America's Coins and Currency*. I spoke about the American muralists, Edwin Blashfield, Will Low and Walter Shirlaw, who designed the 1896 silver certificates known as the Educational Notes. The designation "Educational Notes" is taken from the image of *History Instructing Youth* on the \$1 denomination. Other speakers



at the seminar included the Director of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Peter H. Daly, Curator of the Treasury Building Jane Barton and three others.

The Chase Manhattan Bank Money Museum had a fantastic photo file and it was my responsibility to fill requests from publishers of all types of books, educational and scholarly, including text books, encyclopedias and magazines that needed specific items to illustrate a story or an article. In the early 1970s, Dr. Glenn E. Jackson, a dentist from Connecticut who was a knowledgeable collector, came to the museum seeking photographs for a magazine article he was writing and we became close friends. I consider Dr. Jackson and Lester Merkin as my numismatic mentors and I am extremely grateful for all that I learned from both of these gentlemen.

In 1970, while living on West 75th Street, near Riverside Drive, I discovered that the wife of Anthony De Francisci, the designer of the Peace Dollar—the silver dollar minted between 1921 and 1935—lived a few blocks from me. When I met Theresa De Francisci,



**I recorded a series of “Did You Know” broadcasts for The Chase Manhattan Bank Money Museum. These were brief historical and human interest stories about coins and paper money.** (Photo by Ray Juskus)

who was also the model for the image of *Liberty* on this silver dollar, she was about seventy-five. The following year was the fiftieth anniversary of the issuance of this coin. I wrote an article for *Coin World* about Theresa and her husband, and recounted her experience coming to this country when she was about

eighteen. This was my first experience at article writing and I will admit I had some assistance. Theresa was a lovely lady and I enjoyed my visits to her apartment.

Soon after I met Theresa the building that I was living in on West



**An inserted image of the Peace Dollar on a portrait of a young Theresa De Francisci; and our meeting in 1971.** (Photo by William Devine)

75th in New York was purchased and everyone received an eviction notice. With some advice from a friend I discovered that, based on a technicality, the new owner was required to grant sufficient time for me to move. He ignored this so I went to City Hall and obtained a subpoena, went to his office in Long Island City and served the document to him, requiring him to go to court. His lawyer and I came to an agreement in the hallway just outside the courtroom. I agreed to move by a specific date. However, the owner was required to pay for the storage of my furniture.

More than once during my time in my 75th Street pad the entire building was without heat for five to seven days at a time, often during extremely cold winter weather. Some landlords waited until heating fuel was depleted and tenants complained before the owner ordered a fuel truck to make a delivery. The superintendent could easily have alerted the landlord when fuel was low but he obviously was instructed not to report this. When complaints about no heat were made to the housing authority the landlord was notified and was given a few days to comply. Time for the complaint to reach the proper department, and time for the landlord to comply meant tenants were uncomfortable for as long as seven days. My landlord complied with the law but made us uncomfortable. This was a clever



ruse by some New York landlords to save money.

I continued to look for another apartment but could not find anything that I liked or could afford, so I purchased a house in New Milford, New Jersey, a forty-five-minute subway and bus trip to New York and fell into the routine of commuting back and forth, taking a bus every morning (the bus stop just a few minutes from my house) to the subway, and continuing on the subway downtown to the museum. I didn't like the return trip during rush hour. However, at least two week nights I worked at the Music Hall and returned later by car with a fellow musician.

The house I purchased was typical of the area of bedroom communities for those, including musicians, who worked in New York City. My home was a split-level six-room house on a plot that was 75 by 150 feet. I had plenty of space for my annual vegetable garden. Most of my neighbors were non-musician professionals who worked in New York City. On one side there was a Chinese family, across the street was an Italian family, and a few doors away was a Czech couple. There were blacks in the neighborhood but not as neighbors.

Unfortunately, burglaries became common in the 1960s, and since I was often away in the evenings and even though I am not mechanically inclined I installed a system. As a visual deterrent on my screened back porch I placed an empty (but stuffed with newspaper) large dog food bag next to a large dog food bowl. I had no break-ins. I did all my own cleaning and cooking. With my interest in wine I become an adequate cook and prepared quite a few dinners for friends. Over a period of three years I painted the exterior of my house. My domestic side surfaced during my ten years in New Milford.

Other nearby communities in northern New Jersey included Bergenfield, Demarest, Haworth, Tenaflly, Waldwick, where a few members of the New York Philharmonic lived, and Englewood, where Dizzy Gillespie lived. Guitarist George Benson, Brooke Shields and some members of the singing group The Fifth Dimension lived in some of the nearby communities just mentioned.

While living in New Jersey I discovered that two musician friends, Phil Sunkel and Dick Bagni, made wine. Soon I was doing the same. We made fruit wines mostly. I remember driving to an orchard where I picked over 100 pounds of apples. (Mixed varieties make

the best wine and cider as well.) From this batch Dick Bagni and I made some descent wine. I gave some to neighbors Scott and Claire Cheesman and suggested they keep it in the basement, where it was cooler, to avoid the possibility of a secondary fermentation. Scott put the two bottles in a wine rack in his living room. He and his wife, Claire came home from work one day and found two drunken cats. The wine had fermented again and the corks had blown. I also made wine from a patch of blackberries and two peach trees, which I planted in my backyard.

I joined *les Amis du Vin*; a social organization of wine lovers as had Dick Bagni and Phil Sunkel. There were numerous chapters in and around New York City and northern New Jersey, consequently, there was a large selection of tastings to attend, most of them held in country clubs and hotels. One of the nicest events that included French Bordeaux reds was held at the lovely Gramercy Park Hotel at 2 Lexington Avenue. The country-like park across the street from the hotel and the surroundings made one feel as though Times Square was twenty miles away and not a mere twenty blocks north. As stated previously, Artie Shaw's diminutive group, the Gramercy Five was named for this area.

Years later, when the museum closed, I stayed home during the day. By this time two neighbor-families had three little girls: one Italian and two Chinese. The little girls seemed to think I was a playmate. One of the Chinese girls, who was about five at the time, would knock on my door and ask if I could come out and play. Most of the time I did, including making snowmen and flying a kite with them. I enjoyed living in New Jersey with very amicable neighbors.

The Chase Manhattan Bank Money Museum closed in 1975 and I spent at least a year, perhaps longer making an inventory of the collection before it was shipped to the Smithsonian Institution. I spent the last year with the bank at the main branch at 1 Chase Manhattan Plaza in the Wall Street district. I took advantage of being in this historically rich location. At lunch time I visited Trinity Church and saw the grave sites of Alexander Hamilton, De Witt Clinton and other early American figures. I frequently walked past Federal Hall where George Washington was inaugurated and saw the plaque imbedded in the sidewalk that honored Peter Zenger and his successful challenge for freedom of the press. A few blocks to



the south was Fraunces Tavern, a pub since 1762, that continues in business but is also a museum. It was a watering hole for many of the early revolutionary figures. I found and photographed the location where William Bradford printed the first colonial currency for New York in 1709. I wrote about this for *PAPER MONEY*, the journal for the Society of Paper Money Collectors.

American Bank Note Company (ABNCo) corporate headquarters was just a few blocks from 1 Chase Manhattan Plaza. One day Alice Zecher, a wonderful lady who devoted most of her life to the company, asked me to catalog some world bank notes that were gifts to officers. I literally ran to and from there during my lunch time to record these notes. With the assistance of Ms. Zecher, I gained entry to the ABNCo plant in the Bronx, where I documented some bank notes that were unknown to the collecting world. Until the late 19th century, ABNCo was the major printer of bank notes and securities in the world and printed notes for over 150 countries. When Ms Zecher retired Aurelia Chen, now Aurelia Callwood, succeeded her and with Aurelia's assistance, my relationship with the company continued. With her help, I was able to search ABNCo's engraving records to document who engraved specific subjects on bank notes for many countries.

I left The Chase Manhattan Bank in 1977 and was once again available for substitute work, including matinees in Broadway show orchestras including *Annie* (which included cast member and dancer Rita Rudner before she turned to comedy), and *Sweeney Todd*. (Many people do not realize that amiable and friendly Angela Lansbury is a wonderful singer as she proved nightly playing the challenging role of Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*.) During this period I joined a large group of about 15-20 trombonists on Wednesdays between the matinee and evening Broadway shows. The Broadway show trombonists in this assembly included Jim Pugh, Birch Johnson, Jack Gale, Dave Taylor, Charlie Small, Dale Kirkland and other fearless players who were on the scene then. Charlie Small, the senior group player is one of the best ballad players I have ever heard. Twenty years earlier he became an idol when I was traveling with Elliot Lawrence, Charlie Small was already an icon; he was a staff musician at ABC in New York City. Every Saturday afternoon there was a national broadcast of a show called *Tea and Crumpets*. On

each broadcast Charlie was featured as he played a ballad such as *Softly as in a Morning Sunrise* or some other gem. Regardless where we were—usually in the car traveling—we would find the local ABC affiliate station to hear Charlie play from New York. When I met and worked with Charlie in New York I was compelled to tell him of my admiration for his playing.

In the late 1970s my father and stepmother visited me in New Jersey. As we listened to the national news we heard of a tragedy that happened in Kentucky, just across the river from Cincinnati. A fire at the Beverly Hills supper club in Southgate, Kentucky claimed 165 lives including three friends of mine who played in the band at this nightclub, friends with whom I had worked before I left Cincinnati. They were Bob Roden and Robert Glenn “Hap” Seaman (saxophones) and John Twaddell (trumpet).

During that visit my stepmother said she wanted some Limburger cheese, something I was exposed to at home as a child but could never consider eating because I could never get past the smell. I purchased some at the supermarket and later when I opened it my stepmother said “I think this is bad.” My response was, “how can you tell?”

While I lived in New Milford, New Jersey, two musicians, Dick Meldonian, a saxophonist, and Sonny Iggoe a drummer, organized a rehearsal band. I knew Sonny, who had played with Woody Herman and other bands, but I had never worked with him. But I had worked and recorded with Dick in a number of bands including Elliot Lawrence’s band. This marvelous Monday night band rehearsed at Emerson High School about ten minutes from where I lived. Most often musicians did not work on Monday night, so, that was the evening of choice for playing music for pleasure. I played with this band for nine years and during this time a lot of excellent players joined the band at different times including Johnny Carisi (trumpet), Paul Quinichette, who played tenor saxophone so much like Lester Young that he was called the “Vice Prez,” Lee Katzman (trumpet), Joe Morello (drums) and Al Porcino (trumpet). Some of the regulars included: George Syran and Derek Smith, piano; Jack Six, Linc Milliman and Jerry Bruno, bass, Leo Ball, Paulie Cohen, John Glasel, Joe Ferrante, Don Leight and Phil Sunkel, trumpets; Jim Pugh, Birch Johnson, Dale Kirkland, Eddie Bert, Bobby Pring, Tony Salvatore and



Dean Plank, trombones, Dick Bagni, Vinnie Ricatelli, and Gary Keller, saxophones. Gary Keller is one of the hottest tenor players I worked with. Like Gordon Brisker, and others, Gary made a few records but never gained the recognition he deserved.

Some jazzophiles came every Monday to listen to the band. Sonny Igoe had some students, including his son, Tommy, who is now active



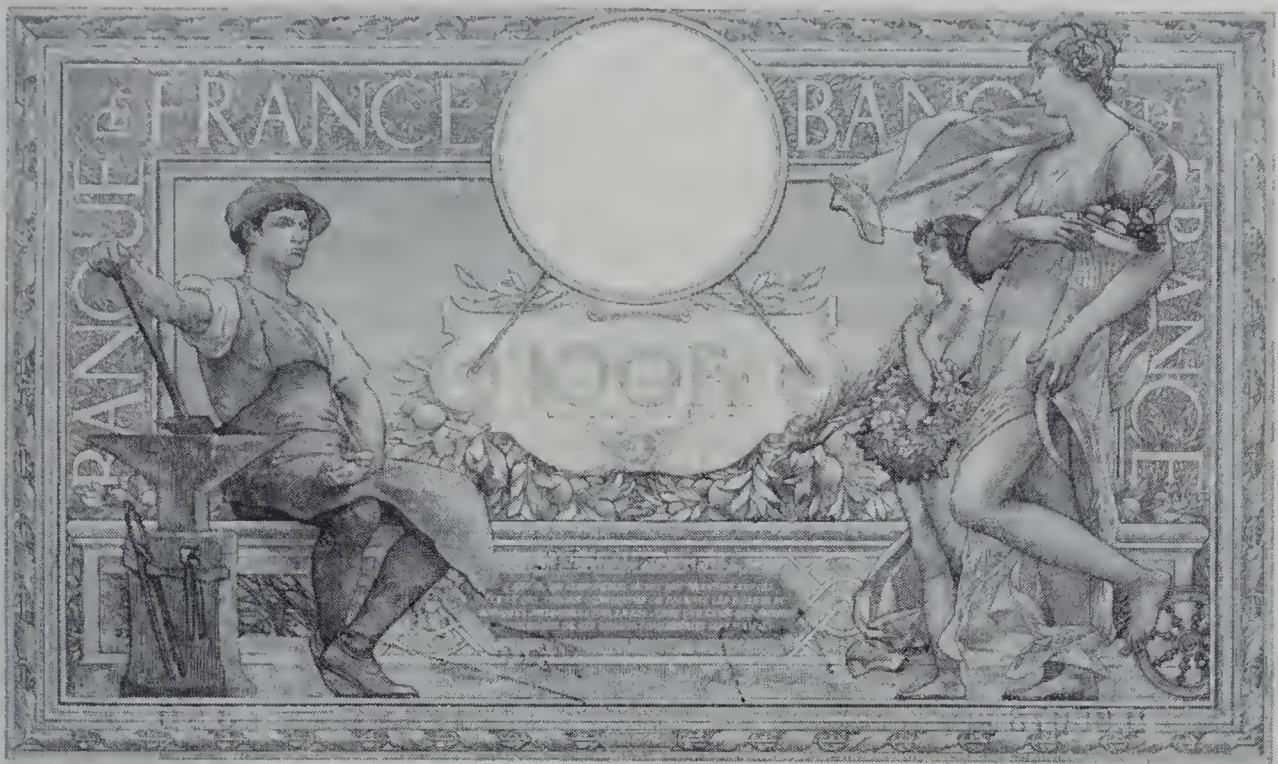
**Soloing with the Meldonian-Igoe band.**

in New York. The comedian Charlie Callas was part of this fraternity and when he was in New York he took some lessons from Sonny. (Quite a few entertainers think they are drummers.) On a particular Monday night Charlie Callas was among the faithful. When Dick Meldonian said let's play *Love for Sale*. Sonny stood up and motioned for Charlie Callas to sit behind the drums, to everyone's surprise. Charlie had obviously played along with the recording that Buddy Rich had made of this arrangement. When we finished, one of the trumpet players leaned away from the drums toward the brass section and softly said,

"Better than Mickey Rooney, not as good as Mel Torme." Unless you are familiar with the Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland movies from the 1940s you might not get the irony of this accurate observation. (In the movies Judy and Mickey always seemed to put on a show and Mickey played adequate drums. In contrast, singer Mel Torme was a composer, arranger and excellent drummer.)

In the early 1980s I became more involved in numismatic writing. By then I had learned about Allyn Cox, the artist who restored the murals in the U.S. Capitol. (He came to my attention while watching *60 Minutes* in May 1981.) Allyn Cox was the son of Kenyon Cox, artist





**The Luc Olivier-Merson style of design that influenced Kenyon Cox.**

and muralist who studied under Duveneck in Cincinnati, and was the designer of the back of the \$100 Federal Reserve note issued in 1914, a radically different design, and I wanted to know why. I wrote to Allyn Cox and told him of my interest in paper money design and engraving and his father's design in particular. I requested a meeting with him on my next periodic visit to the nation's capital. Mr. Cox responded cordially and I met him at the Cosmos Club, his place of residence. (This club is for men who have made contributions



**Kenyon Cox**

to or who have received recognition in the fields of science, literature and the arts. An interior hallway is covered with portraits of members who received the Nobel Prize and recipients of other awards.)

As we sat in the courtyard of the Cosmos Club, Allyn Cox explained that when his father studied art in Paris in the early 20th century he became an admirer of French paper money designed by Luc Olivier-Merson (1846-1920), an artist whose designs have a delicate, almost fragile appearance and which he embellished with ink



of an appropriate pastel color. In addition, the human figures he drew demanded soft engraved lines, not like most American paper money. Cox adopted this style of design, a style that begged for the style of engraving that Kenyon Cox preferred (similar to the early engravings of Dürer, Mantegna, and Lucas van Leyden). Cox received his wish, and his design was engraved by G.F.C. Smillie and was used on the 1914 note and remains a one-of-a-kind U.S. paper money design.



**The back of the 1914 Federal Reserve note designed by Kenyon Cox.**

### Allyn Cox

Allyn Cox mentioned that as a boy of sixteen he served as the model for *Commerce (Mercury)*, one of the five figures in the design. The other figures represent *America*, *Labor*, *Peace* and *Plenty*. (An extended article about the designer and this design can be found in *PAPER MONEY*, No. 234, p. 4.) Allyn Cox, born in 1896, died on September 28, 1982, a year after we met. He never saw the article I wrote about him and his father. (Examples of the work of Allyn Cox include a portrait of *Henry Clay* in the Senate Reception Room of the Capitol and a mural of the *Burning of the Capitol by the British, 1814* in the House Wing of the Capitol. The work of Kenyon Cox is more widely known. He studied at the McMicken School of Design, affiliated with the University of Cincinnati, and with Frank Duveneck at the Mechanics' Institute also in Cincinnati.)

At the time of the meeting with Mr. Cox, I was revising the *Comprehensive Catalog* and began to write for some numismatic publications. In 1984 I became editor of *Paper Money*, the journal of the Society of Paper Money Collectors. This society was organized

in 1961 and remains the preeminent organization for collectors of paper money. Originally a quarterly, *Paper Money* is now a bi-monthly magazine. It was a challenge to take a typewritten manuscript and with illustrations transform it into a visually attractive article of interest that compelled the reader to digest it. In 1998 after fourteen years I resigned as editor of *Paper Money*. My successor was researcher and writer Fred Reed III.

With numismatic research and writing becoming more important to me, I arrived at the point where I preferred not to go into New York unless absolutely necessary. I even turned down musical gigs because I didn't want to go into New York, as close as it was. As an example, the day before a dinner I had planned, I received a call to substitute in the Liza Minelli show and turned it down. To cook a meal and have some good wine with friends was more important at the time.

The last New Year's Eve gig I played before leaving New York was with a quintet in the Windows of the World at the top of the World Trade Center. Tenor saxophonist Dick Meldonian and guitarist Wayne Wright are the only names I remember from that group. There was a second band in another room and I remember guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli came to listen during his intermission. By this time Johnny Carson had taken the *Tonight Show* to Los Angeles and Bucky, who had been in Doc Severinsen's band, was now free-lancing exclusively. The restaurant was known for its wine cellar and I made certain I met the cellar master and told him of my interest in wine. He opened a marvelous bottle of French champagne at midnight and we toasted the New Year.

Early in that new year I was in the neighborhood supermarket one day and realized that Red Rodney, the bebop trumpet player whom I met when he was playing with Charlie Parker, was standing in front of me. Red Rodney faded off the scene for a while because he became almost hopelessly addicted to heroin. He disappeared and everyone had written him off. Then, after years and years he re-emerged in Las Vegas, playing with one of the show bands. He was clean and playing well, and came back to New York and renewed his career as a jazz player. As housewives loaded their station wagons with groceries we stood in the parking lot and talked about our initial meeting and another in 1955 in Chicago when I was with Woody Herman.



While still living in New Jersey I cataloged the famous Nicolas Marie Alexandre Vattemare collection of paper money for Christie's in New York City. This was a collection that few people knew about, a collection that included numerous interest-bearing notes that had never before been offered for sale. This Frenchman (1796-1864) came to America in 1839 as a ventriloquist and performed at the Park Theatre in New York City. Before he returned to Paris in 1841, Vattemare developed a plan for international exchanges between libraries and museums. In 1847 Vattemare returned to the United States and convinced Congress to appoint him as an agent to implement his exchange plan. He was able to acquire examples of U.S. Treasury notes, interest-bearing notes and bonds. Some of these were dated in the 1840s and originally prepared by companies that consolidated to become American Bank Note Company in 1858. As a result we can assume that these pieces were printed later from the original engraved plates.

In January 1863 Vattemare wrote to Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase to thank him for the "valuable series of specimens of the Treasury Notes, Loans, etc., you were kind enough to grant... through the Hon. John Bigelow, U.S. Consul...to complete the series from 1708 to 1861 collected by me for *public use*" (italics added). This assemblage became Vattemare's personal collection and after passing through other hands came to Christie's in 1982. I was fortunate to be the one to catalog this unique collection.

A few years later, while cataloging another collection at Christie's, I met John Jackson, who also ranked as a serious-minded researcher of security engravers, and he introduced himself and explained that he shared my interest in the history of security engraving. We became friends immediately, and I subsequently introduced him to Mark Tomasko another collector, who shared our passion for this line of study, and graduated from the same university as John. Together with Dr. Glenn Jackson, Walter Allan, Roger Durand and Jim Haxby<sup>4</sup> we spearheaded this specialized field. I met a few other talented and dedicated students of security engraving (that includes paper money, stocks and bonds) at the Coinage of America's Conference held at the headquarters of the American Numismatic Society (ANS) in New York City from October 31 through November 2, 1985. Eleven numismatists, including Dr. Glenn Jackson, my engraving study

mentor had been invited to deliver papers about America's currency between 1789 and 1866. (The latter year brought an end currency issues by private banks in the United States and the Confederate States of America.) Richard G. Doty, PhD, a former curator at the ANS who had moved to the Smithsonian Institution, was the conference chairman. My topic was "The History and Development of 'America' as Symbolized by an American Indian Female" on American paper money. Each of the eleven topics was published in an ANS *Festschrift*.<sup>5</sup>

Soon after my participation in this numismatic forum that was held in New York City I headed westward. In the summer of 1985 I received a telephone call from Eric P. Newman, a friend and a legend in the world of numismatics. Eric and his wife Evelyn are prominent figures in St. Louis society. Both are involved in philanthropic causes, especially medical research. Until he retired in about 1990, Eric, a graduate of MIT was executive vice president and secretary of Edison Brothers, a prominent nationwide firm that operated national retail clothing and shoe stores.

Eric asked me to come to St. Louis to be curator of the St. Louis Mercantile Bank Money Museum. After a month or more of deliberation and a trip to St. Louis to look things over I decided to make the move. I stayed with a friend while I looked for a place to live. I considered purchasing a house, but uncertain if I would remain in St. Louis I decided on an apartment on Lindell Boulevard, opposite the St. Louis Cathedral. In the fall of 1985 I returned to New Jersey, rented a U Haul truck and moved my things to St. Louis, stopping in Cincinnati on the way. A New Jersey neighbor said he would look after my house until I decided if I would sell it, which I did eight months later. I was fortunate because I sold the house at the peak of the 1986 real estate market.

It has been said that one shouldn't make more than two major life changes at one time. I moved from a house to an apartment, moved to a different city, and took a new job. I went through some moderate depression in St. Louis, which I attribute to all of these changes.

In January of 1986 I became the curator of the Mercantile Bank Money Museum in St. Louis. The contents of the museum belonged to Eric P. Newman and the Eric P. Newman Numismatic Foundation;



the St. Louis Mercantile Bank provided museum space in their main branch at 7th and Washington in downtown St. Louis. Eric began collecting as a child and assembled one of the most significant private collections in the country. Numismatic literature is replete with book, pamphlet and article titles by Eric P. Newman.

My primary responsibility was to create new exhibits, speak to groups who visited the museum, respond to public and media inquiries about money in general and news-related topics related to numismatics. Eric Newman's paper money collection had never been formally cataloged so this was one of the first things I undertook. The collection consists of American coins, paper money and ephemera. However, Eric's *forte* as far as interest and knowledge is in money from colonial America. *The Early Paper Money of America* is the bible for paper money issued by individual colonial states and the Continental Congress.

The museum had no curator before I went there. Few, if any of the original exhibits had been changed since the museum opened in March 1981. I immediately created new exhibits using the wealth of material in the Newman collection. That first year in St. Louis, 1986, was the centennial of the installation of the *Statue of Liberty* and the first anniversary of the redeveloped St. Louis Union Station. Just as the Cincinnati Union Station was reawakened with an interior change, St. Louis did so as well. The St. Louis Station now consists of restaurants and shops. These and other attractions that at times include live entertainment make the Union Station a popular stop for tourists as well as natives of St. Louis.

To acknowledge both of these events I created exhibits that consisted of coins, paper money, stock certificates, bonds and checks that had images of trains and locomotives, and the likeness of the *Statue of Liberty*. The St. Louis Mercantile Museum was kind enough to loan some ephemeral material from its extensive collection of railroad memorabilia. Loaned material included early tickets, passes and cross-section remnants from railroad tracks that carried trains through St. Louis. With the assistance of a friend and collector, a stock certificate for the Terminal Railroad Association with an engraving of the St. Louis Union Station was loaned for the exhibit. There are so many obsolete bank notes from the mid-19th century with images of trains and locomotives one could illustrate a

history of railroads in the U.S. with paper money alone.

The *Statue of Liberty* exhibit had one item that surprised most visitors. It was a Chinese bank note with an engraving of the *Statue of Liberty*. Historically speaking this was not strange at all, considering the note was issued by the Chinese American Bank of Commerce in 1920, and printed by American Bank Note Company. This was one of many foreign banks that operated in China and issued its own paper money. The ceding of Hong Kong to Great Britain and the Treaty of Nanking in 1842 opened the China trade and provided a base for foreign banks. The Bank of Western India was the first to open in 1842.<sup>6</sup>

These and subsequent exhibits, due to extensive newspaper coverage, brought people to the museum who had never heard of it before. Eric Newman and the Mercantile Bank Public Relations Department were happy. As curator I was invited to speak before a variety of groups, educational and social, and in association with some museum exhibits was interviewed on local television.

### **Deaths in the Family**

In 1986, as I was about to return to St. Louis after a visit to Cincinnati for Christmas, my father was taken to the hospital with pneumonia. He died the next day. My mother died in 1973 while I was living in New Jersey. She and her twin sister Anna (Staab) died within thirty-six hours of each other, of the same cause: colon cancer. I do not remember shedding a tear when my mother passed away. However, when I returned to New York and was on the subway on my way home I went to pieces, doing my best not to cause too much attention. For years when I returned to Cincinnati at Christmas I always expected to see my parents. In 1992 my brother, Jack died of liver cancer. He died during a one-man-show of his paintings and photographs. Those who own some of his artwork—watercolors and photographs—are extremely fortunate.

In my second year in St. Louis I received an invitation to speak at a gathering of paper money collectors in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. At the same time I received a telephone call from a representative for General Mills. The company wanted to place reprints of obsolete bank note issued by private and state banks in the early and mid 19th century in cereal boxes. The printer of those notes was American



Bank Note Company (ABNCo) and some predecessor companies and some of the original plates remained in the ABNCo archives.

I decided to combine the trip to New Jersey and one to ABNCo, where I would select the bank notes for the cereal promotion. I flew to New Jersey a few days prior to the speaking engagement and stayed with friends Jean and Ken MacKenzie in northern New Jersey. The evening of my arrival I didn't feel well. After two days of researching bank notes at the ABNCo plant in Suffern, New York, about 20 miles from the MacKenzies I knew something was wrong. I went to the emergency room of Englewood Hospital in Englewood, New Jersey and was told I had pneumonia. The speaking engagement was cancelled and I returned to St. Louis about eight days later. General Mills liked the bank note images I selected and the promotion was a success.

In St. Louis I made some friends and sought out some jazz musicians. There were a few beboppers whom I befriended including saxophonist Paul De Marinis and pianists Kim Portnoy and Herb Drury, all wonderful players. Webster College has a jazz program, as many schools now have, and the musicians just mentioned taught there. I went to some of their concerts including one that featured the Canadian valve trombonist and arranger Rob McConnell. I played two gigs, but to practice enough to regain and maintain professional proficiency would have been too time-consuming. So I put my instrument aside. Research and writing had become more important than performing. This confounded my relatives and most of my friends who knew of my devotion to music.

St. Louis resembles Cincinnati in many ways being situated on a major river, with sports stadiums near the river, but I never felt totally at home there. Many of the street names in St. Louis bear the names of the French traders who spent time there, and in St. Louis there is a large Italian section with good restaurants. Uncertain how long I would remain in the city with the arch, I chose an apartment just inside the city limits. The bus ride to the museum took no more than fifteen minutes. During the third year in St. Louis a disagreement with Eric Newman, who owned the collection at the museum, prompted me to leave the museum. Nevertheless, we remained friends and I stayed in St. Louis until 1996. A few years after I left, the Mercantile Bank Money Museum reclaimed the space

where the museum had been. Now, Eric's collection is on display in a new facility built specifically for this purpose on the campus of Washington University.

After I left the museum I had some time on my hands. I looked for a way to do something constructive in the community. I lived across the street from the St. Louis Cathedral, which I attended, and I went to its school and asked if I could volunteer my time in some way. For a while I re-shelved books in the library once each week. Then I began visiting the 5th grade, where I introduced the students to the history of money and showed them paper money from around the world. For those who wanted to collect I had them reimburse me for the cost of inexpensive notes, and in addition I gave notes to them. I began with each 5th grade class and I followed the other classes as they progressed to higher grades. I continued this program for about six years. When I returned to Cincinnati I did the same at St. Boniface School and then at St. Catherine's until 2003.

When possible I coordinated my discussions with countries the students were investigating. I learned that when you hold a piece of history in your hands, in this instance a piece of paper money, it reinforces what you are studying. Even if the students were unable to read the script in the languages in which the notes were printed, I was able to arouse their curiosity through the images on the notes. I showed them a few tricks in how to read key words that identified the country of origin. Paper money from Russia, Bulgaria, Belarus, and other countries was printed in a script that was totally foreign to the students. Consequently, I introduced them to the Cyrillic alphabet telling them it was named after St. Cyril, and again with a few letters, similar and different from our alphabet how to identify the country. I hope that from what I said in those classes I planted a seed of curiosity about how money of one country relates to another and how it is different from ours. I hope this seed developed in the minds of some when they advanced to higher grades. A few of the teachers admitted that they too had learned a few things from my visits.

Through my volunteer teaching at the Cathedral School I became acquainted with some interesting people. These included Donna Korando Heidenry, editor of the editorial page of the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* and her husband Jim Heidenry, a lawyer and developer.



Both of them were active in and devoted to and maintaining some of the neighborhoods in St. Louis, especially the Gaslight district in which they lived. The Heidenry's were the parents of Cathedral School students Reid and Rachel.

Other interesting parents were Josephine and Willem Dickhoff, parents of Cathedral students Vincent and Iris, all intelligent people who understood my goals as a volunteer teacher. Josie is an artist, Willem a physicist at Washington University, and their children are extremely bright and civic minded. I socialized with them and enjoyed talking about everything from art to politics. For a while I gave weekly recorder lessons to Iris. Parents like these understood what I was trying to convey to children in the classroom. Money weaves its way through all of history and has affected and been affected by events.

Barbara Moynihan, the 5th grade teacher, was responsible for my teaching at the school. I became involved with the Cathedral School curriculum and was elected to the school board and served for my last two years in St. Louis.

In the summer of 1988 I was watching a PBS documentary on the life of conductor Arturo Toscanini, which included interviews with musicians from around the world who had worked with the maestro. Some interviewees included musicians, older than I, but with whom I had worked in New York. An opera singer, in her 80s was speaking of her collaborations with the Toscanini and she had my attention when her name appeared on the screen: Jarmila Novotna.

Ms. Novotna was the model for *Liberty*, the image that appeared on a 100-korun bank note that circulated in her native Czechoslovakia in 1932. I had known this but didn't know where she resided at the time of the broadcast. At the close of the broadcast I wrote to the producer of the show that originated in New York and was directed to the interviewer. My request for her address was answered: Ms. Novotna was living in New York City. I wrote to her and mentioned that I was a musician and numismatist and requested an autographed photograph that would be placed next to my Czech bank note with the image of *Liberty*. She acquiesced and I now have both the bank note *and* the personalized signed portrait. The portrait in costume for her role in Smetana's *Bartered Bride* was taken in 1925 when she made her debut in this role.

In 1988, my third year at the museum *An Illustrated History of U.S. Loans, 1775-1898* was published. There was no source that illustrated the loan documents, commencing



**The Czech bank note, with the Slovakia overprint, and the portrait of the female model for *Liberty*, Jarmila Novotna.**



with the first one from France on December 23, 1776. *History of the Currency of the Country and the Loans of the United States* by W.F. DeKnight documented these loans but there were no illustrations. The earliest document I found to illustrate was at the American Philosophical Society. It was the second loan, also from France, and was authorized on December 3, 1777. This document was printed by Benjamin Franklin.

These early documents, many of which have not survived, were extremely difficult to locate. Historian William G. Anderson provided some illustrations, some were found at the Bureau of the Public Debt, others were in private collections, and some issued after the 1860s were found at the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Few of the early documents are collectable. Nevertheless, in my opinion and that of others, the visual documentation is important. The bonds issued for and prior to the Spanish-American War are extremely attractive.

While living in St. Louis a new edition of the *Comprehensive Catalog of U.S. Paper Money* was published, and I wrote monthly columns for *the Numismatist*, the journal of the American Numismatic Association, *Coin World* and occasional articles for other publications.<sup>7</sup> In addition, I prepared for publication of *The Engraver's Line, an encyclopedia of paper money and postage stamp art*. It includes biographies of engravers and designers who



worked in the U.S. since 1690 and lists of their work. (This was the first published compilation on this subject.) I began researching this work while I lived in New Jersey. While researching engraver attributions for specific 19th century American paper money at the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing, I came across designs that were considered but rejected. Some of these essays are more interesting than the designs that were accepted and issued. All this data, with illustrations was presented in *U.S. Essay, Proof and Specimen Notes* published in 1979. The second edition was released in 2004. This book introduced the collecting world to unissued designs that could have gone unnoticed. What I thought was my final book until I started this one was *The International Engraver's Line (TIEL)* published in 2005 after I returned to Cincinnati. This book complements *The Engraver's Line* by documenting artists who worked in countries other than the U.S. Of all the engravers that I documented from the 17th century to the issuance of the Euro notes, less than twenty were women.

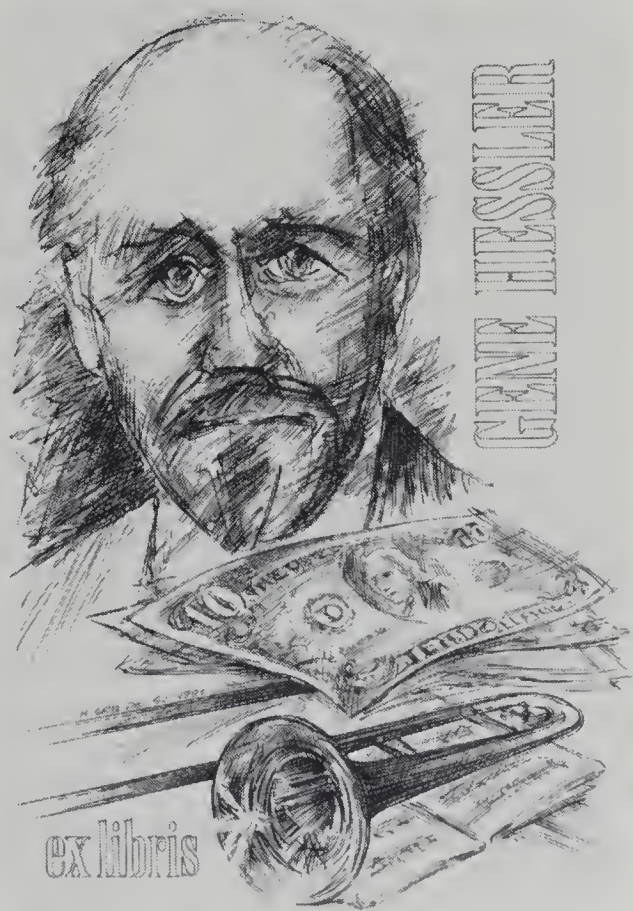
When not researching or writing I continued to explore St. Louis. Within walking distance of my apartment on Lindell Avenue in St. Louis I could experience a number of different neighborhoods. Cobbled streets with converted gas lights, in some instances, before houses that reflected a variety of architecture made these neighborhoods individual and made me forget that downtown St. Louis was only two or three miles away. The old Chase Hotel was about three blocks from where I lived. This was one of the many hotels where traveling bands once played for a week, or more, and from where broadcasts emanated. (About 1950 I played at the Chase Hotel with Elliot Lawrence.) The Tune Town Ballroom, a famous location for bands to play, I was told, was near the Fox Theater on Grand Boulevard, two blocks west of St. Louis University, not far from where I lived. The Count Basie recording of *Tune Town Shuffle* was named after this legendary location. I think the ballroom was demolished in the late 1940s nevertheless, it was operating as late as 1945. (On the Internet I discovered that Elliot Lawrence played a one-nighter there on June 23, 1945, four years before I joined the band.)

St. Louis continued to feel like a temporary living place and I considered returning to greater-New York City. If I was to continue

researching the history of paper money and engravers I thought I should be near a large library. I also considered moving to Maryland, to be near Washington, DC, High Point and Chapel Hill, North Carolina and Charlottesville, Virginia, but none of these places inspired me to move there. So I remained in St. Louis and made periodic trips to Washington, DC to research material at the National Archives, the Smithsonian Institution and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and other government offices.

During these trips I became good friends with Bob Leuver, Director of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (1983-1988). Bob introduced me to Willibald “Willi” Kranister, a Director (in charge of the paper money facilities) for the National Bank of Austria who Bob knew through international paper money conferences concerning counterfeiting. Kranister was compiling information for *The Money Makers International* (1989) and he, on Bob’s recommendation, asked me to help organize the section on U.S. paper money. After two or three drafts Willi came to St. Louis, where we finalized the text and illustrations. Willi and I became close friends and he invited me to visit him in Vienna. In 1990 I accepted his invitation and he and his wife Elfi treated me royally at their home.

Willi put me up in his guest house (or chalet) in Klosterneuburg, about thirty minutes outside of Vienna. In the church in Klosterneuburg is a plaque recognizing organist and composer Anton Bruckner (1824-1896), who had played the organ that was first built in 1636 by Johann Freundt. At the National Bank of Austria I met engravers Kurt Leitgeb, Gerhart Schmir—Maria Magdalena Laurent was on vacation. I was introduced to designer Robert Kalina, who succeeded Professor Roman Hellman as designer. Mr. Kalina designed the first Euro notes and the European Union placed the first of fifteen billion notes in



**An *ex libris* engraved by Martin Srb.**



circulation in January 2002.

On my first day in Vienna Willi took me to lunch at the Sacher Wien Hotel, the place where the *sacher torte* desert had its origin. The décor in the hotel, the restaurant and the way the waiters were dressed, all were emblematic of the days of the empire and Franz Josef. During the daytime, when Willi didn't need his driver and car, they were offered to me for sightseeing and visits to museums. As I walked through Vienna I realized that Beethoven and Mozart walked those same streets. It is known that Beethoven lived at many locations. I saw four or more buildings with a plaque near the entrance stating that Beethoven had once lived there.

On that same trip in 1990 I visited Prague in what was then Czechoslovakia and there I spent time with František Sedláček, a collector-friend, who introduced me to all the security engravers (Vaclav Fajt, Miloš Ondráček, Bohumil Šneider and Martin Srb) at the state printing facilities in Prague. This visit took place just months after the velvet revolution that brought Vaclav Havel to the presidency. František, my host, had saved vacation time from his place of employment and took me around and through Prague to see places and things I might have missed had I been on my own as a tourist. When we passed the American Embassy I was tempted to go in and see if Ambassador Shirley Temple would like to speak with someone of the same age who had grown up watching her on the screen at the Main Theater in Mount Healthy. František and his wife Jarmila took me to a small cottage they had in the country for the weekend. As we drove through hills in the countryside I could hear the music of Antonin Dvořák.

In Budapest, Hungary, by means of an introduction by Willi Kranister, I was able to visit the printing facilities and meet the Hungarian engravers as well. Walking through Buda and Pest, separated by the Danube River, composers Liszt, and Bartok were on my mind. I had arrived in Hungary about a year after the country made the final break from the communist government from which people had distanced themselves. I arrived in the evening and the railroad station was full of poorly dressed Indians, Africans, Romanians and undoubtedly some Hungarians, all bedding down for the night. All were looking for a better life but caught up in the middle of a political and economic transition. The odor in this open

communal bedroom was extremely unpleasant.

I made it safely back to St. Louis, where I spent my first few days at home reading accumulated mail and completing routine chores. Then I returned to my engraving research, which involved another trip to Washington, DC, where I once more spent a day or two at the National Archives among researchers of all types who often examined historic documents with historic signatures. With each advancing year the security at the Archives became more strict. There were stories in the newspapers about documents and letters disappearing, consequently, materials that researchers could take with them into research rooms became minimal: no briefcases, only a single piece of paper on which to take notes.

In 1993 I assisted Paul Schmid with *The American Paper Money Collection*, a collection of 36 reprinted bank notes from the original plates at American Bank Note Co. Each note was accompanied by a description and background material that I researched. This collection was housed in a simulated leather binder and sold to collectors. In addition to payment for my work on this project I was given one of the sets of notes: a very attractive group.

### **Example of Script for Peabody Award Nomination in 1993**

The American Numismatic Association asked me and others to write two-minute stories for *Money Talks*, little factual vignettes broadcast over National Public Radio stations in the United States. I wrote at least 30 and one was selected to represent *Money Talks* when it was nominated for a Peabody Broadcasting Award in 1993. Here is the *Hand-Drawn Counterfeits that Fooled Everyone*:

“Emmanuel Ninger spent his days alone in an upper room in his New Jersey home, as any artist might do. But Emanuel Ninger was no starving artist. How could he be, when he spent his days developing the art of counterfeiting?

“The man *The New York Times* would call the “Pen and Ink Counterfeiter” perfected his craft to an art. He would place a piece of bond paper, cut to size, in water colored with coffee grounds. The coffee gave the paper an appearance of moderate handling. Ninger wanted to avoid the attention that might be called to a new crisp note. Then, with an authentic bill under the wet paper, Ninger meticulously traced the entire bill. After the tiny engraved lines were imitated, he added the appropriate colors with a camel hair brush.

“It was a counterfeit 1880 \$50 note that sent Ninger to jail. On a damp



March night in 1896—just before boarding the ferry in Manhattan for his return to New Jersey—Ninger stopped in at a saloon. The bartender recognized him, and didn't hesitate to change a \$50 bill. Soon after Ninger left, the bartender noticed ink on his fingers. He looked at the \$50 bill, which had come in contact with moisture on the bar. Sure enough, part of the design was smudged. The counterfeiter was arrested...and after his trial, Emanuel Ninger served a few years in prison.

"His life's work of \$30,000 or more in counterfeit money was precise in every way but one. Next to the portrait of Benjamin Franklin on a genuine 1880 \$50 bill you'll find, in tiny letters, the words ENGRAVED AND PRINTED AT THE BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING. This credit was not on Emanuel Ninger's creations. After all, if an artist couldn't sign his own work—why should he give credit to someone else?"

This and some of the other stories were printed in *Money Talks, a program on the history and lore of money*, the American Numismatic Association (1996). (Published here with permission.)

In 1994 I met artist J.S.G. Boggs at one of the annual International Paper Money Shows in Memphis. Boggs is known for his artwork that resembles paper money but differs just enough to keep the authorities from claiming his work as counterfeit. Most often Boggs changes wording on the notes, *e.g.*, instead of the large "ONE" in the center of the back of the \$1 note, Boggs drew "FUN." This was done one year for collectors at the annual Florida United Numismatists (FUN) show. He has been arrested, tried and fully exonerated for counterfeiting his art-notes in England and Australia. The Secret Service in the United States has been less than kind to Boggs. (He was never convicted of counterfeiting in the U.S., nevertheless, as of this writing, confiscated materials that include drawings, sketches, ink and paper have never been returned to Boggs by the U.S. Secret Service.) His creations, which he originally created on the spot, most often in restaurants, were offered as payment, not as money but works of art. Some waiters and cashiers accepted but most rejected his offer. Nevertheless, Boggs gained a reputation for purchasing everything from meals to a motorcycle with his art-notes, which can be found in some museums.

Boggs attended the Memphis International Paper Money Show, and had heard about *The Engraver's Line*. He approached me and offered to purchase a copy if I would accept payment with one of his

creations, his version of a \$100 bill. (His rendition included minor differences in the wording on the design.) I said yes, even though by this time he was making his art-notes mechanically, rather than by hand, the skill that had brought him international recognition. The price of the book was \$85, so I gave Boggs \$15 in return for his piece of art that resembled a \$100 Federal Reserve note. He then wrote my name and his in the places where the U.S. Treasurer and Secretary of the Treasury should have been on the art-note. On the back of the piece Boggs wrote my name, the amount of the purchase, the serial numbers of the \$5 and \$10 notes I gave him in change. Then he placed two of his finger prints on the back: one in the center, the other on the edge that had a wide border. He then separated the piece by cutting through the center of one of his fingerprints. He then signed his name.

As I walked away from Boggs someone tapped me on the shoulder and offered to purchase the art-note created by Boggs. I said I needed a little time to look at the piece and then decide. The potential purchaser and I got together later and we agreed on a price. The fastest money I ever made, but not the end of the deal. Those who collect Boggs's art want to acquire all the money that changes hands in the transaction. So somebody probably purchased the \$15 I gave Boggs, the certainty of which could be identified by the serial numbers that Boggs recorded on the back of his art-note that I accepted.

At the Memphis meetings and those at other locations competitive exhibitions are held for interested collectors. Themes for the exhibits are boundless. (Themes include world paper money and related engravings that might include images of authors, musicians, artists, *e.g.*, Italy issued paper money with engraved portraits of Michaelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, Caravaggio, and Raphael. An exhibitor might select the work of a particular designer or engraver, or designs that were not issued, topics limited only to one's imagination.) After finding the notes and engravings, which might take years, and the research time for the specific exhibit, one can spend a considerable amount of time preparing an exhibit. Artistic presentation takes additional time. When preparing the captions for the exhibit material, there frequently are facts, dates or circumstances that must be documented. This means more time. From



this research I always learned more about how the designer and the engraver fit into the history of numismatics and history in general.

Monetary awards are the exception for these exhibit competitions, most often a plaque with the title of the exhibit, the date and place mentioned there on is given to the top three exhibitors. Regardless, for the dedicated exhibitor, satisfaction of assembling and conveying information is the reward. I exhibited portions of my collection on at least fifty occasions and have boxes of plaques as a result.

The “Best of Show Award” at the annual American Numismatic Association (ANA) Convention is the ultimate exhibit recognition. All first place recipients in about 20 different categories of coins (ancient and modern), paper money (obsolete, U.S. world), medals, odd and curious money, and a few other categories are judged for the top award. In 1991 at the 100th anniversary ANA Convention in Chicago I received this coveted award for an exhibit of the complete work of Czech paper money designer, Max Švabinský (1873-1962).



**Seated in my Uncle Carl's midget race car in 1938 and in a 1950s Allard during a visit to a friend in New Jersey in 1993.**

## Chapter XII

### Back Home Again in Cincinnati 1996

FOR YEARS, I often thought I might move back to Cincinnati and in the summer of 1996 I drove to Cincinnati and looked for a place to live. I looked at a few places but considered only two of them: one an apartment on the east side of town near the local business district of the neighborhood of Hyde Park, and the other the one in my favorite part of Cincinnati, the west side of town where I now live.<sup>1</sup> As a musician in my teens I had played at east side country clubs—the Cincinnati Country Club, Macatewah, Hyde Park, and Camargo—and also high schools in the eastside neighborhoods of Madeira and Mariemont. But I was always more comfortable and felt more at home on the west side.

A few of my Cincinnati musician friends are still here and some continue to work on a limited basis. When I left in 1955 there were at least five or six big bands that worked regularly on weekends, now one or two work irregularly. The surviving crowd that dances to this type of music has dwindled and grown older. The Blue Wisp club opened after I left town and has relocated twice since that time. The ensemble playing of the Blue Wisp big band is equal to most big bands that I admire or have played with. The band's library includes many original arrangements in addition to gems originally found in libraries of Woody Herman, Dizzy Gillespie, Stan Kenton and others. The Blue Wisp band is a Cincinnati jazz treasure. Of the sixteen guys (in the big band led by drummer John von Ohlen) who play at the Blue Wisp each Wednesday night I know only a few of them (Steve Schmidt, Mike Andres, Al Nori and Joe Gaudio).<sup>2</sup> The others are younger and to them I am a stranger in my hometown. The only Cincinnati trombone players who remember me are Bill Gemmer and Paul Piller, both excellent musicians. Nevertheless, as my friend Bill Motzing a New York trombonist once said, "It's better to be a has-been than a never-was."

There are some remarkable jazz players in Cincinnati with a limited number of places to perform. There are six or eight clubs and restaurants where jazz can be heard on weekends, though most often it is a solo pianist, duo or trio and on occasion an additional



instrument. The most active pianists are Frank Vincent, Phil DeGreg and eclectic Steve Schmidt. The explosion of restaurants and clubs in Newport, Kentucky has created a few additional places for jazz musicians to perform. However, it is other types of pop music that are most often heard at these places.

The College Conservatory at the University of Cincinnati has a jazz program with some wonderful instructors, pianist Phil DeGreg, who once played with Woody Herman's band, trombonist Paul Piller, percussionist and vibraphonist extraordinaire Rusty Burge, and saxophonist Rick van Matre. They turn out some inventive players. But many of those young lions will find it difficult to make a living as a jazz performer due to the diminishing interest in the art form. Nevertheless, as "keepers of the flame," I admire those who continue to pursue jazz as their personal expression because they compelled.



**With singer and pianist Shirley Jester at my father's 80th birthday celebration.** (Photo by Jack Hessler)

Soon after I returned to Cincinnati I ran into pianist and singer Shirley Jester, whom I had met when she was about ten years of age. I remembered visiting her sister, Jean and sitting on the front porch in the summer where I first heard Shirley play piano. She played tunes on the piano but could not read music. I could tell Shirley had

a gift and she developed into a marvelous pianist and singer, one of Cincinnati's most popular entertainers. Shirley had not performed for a few years following a stroke; she died in 2003, a great loss for Cincinnati entertainment. Her sister, Jean, died in 2006.

A few years after I returned to Cincinnati, Gordon Brisker and his wife Cindy came back to Cincinnati from his teaching position at a university in Australia. Gordon, one of the most talented musicians I have known, worked out of Cincinnati going to New York City, Boston, San Francisco and Los Angeles and elsewhere as gigs came along. He spent most of the rest of his time working on weekends in Cincinnati and writing arrangements for groups all over the world. He organized a big band, which for a time played one night each week at the Barrel House Brewery, a brewery, restaurant and club on the lower edge of the Over-the Rhine district. Gordon wrote most of the arrangements and it was such a pleasure listening to this band made up of Cincinnati musicians. On one of these evenings at the Brewery I met Oscar Treadwell, the famous late-night disc jockey and poet immortalized by compositions written for him including *An Oscar for Treadwell*, written and recorded by Charlie Parker, *Oska T*, by Thelonious Monk and *Treadin' with Treadwell* by tenor saxophonist Wardell Gray. Oscar did more than his share in the effort to keep jazz in the public consciousness. On my invitation that night Oscar and a few mutual friends came to my home and we participated in jazz-talk for a few hours.

By this time Oscar had retired from his record-spinning days at radio stations in Philadelphia and Cincinnati and had donated his collection of jazz records to the Cincinnati Public Library. Then, to the delight of many of us, WGUC, one of Cincinnati's public radio stations announced that Oscar would return to radio with a Sunday night broadcast, another emergency-room stimulant for jazz. Unfortunately Oscar died in April 2006, less than a year after he returned to radio.

Two years before Gordon Brisker died he introduced me to Paavo Järvi, the wonderful and "hip" conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, who continues to have an interest in jazz. As a teenager Paavo was a rock and roll drummer in his native Estonia but he soon moved on and became one of the world's most competent conductors. I wish I could have performed under Paavo's baton and



told him so after a concert.

These days in Cincinnati I listen to music, but my trombone gathers dust as I continue my career as a numismatic researcher and writer. The American Numismatic Association in Colorado Springs, Colorado sponsors seminars during July, and for four years, Mark Hotz, a paper money dealer and scholar from Maryland and I co-instructed a class on U.S. paper money. Students ranged from teenagers to men and women in their 60s. Classes were held in both the morning and afternoon each day for a week on the campus of Colorado College. It was a satisfying experience to pass on knowledge and enlighten people on a subject in which they had an interest.

To spread the “gospel” I assembled an exhibit for the Cincinnati Public Library that consisted of world paper money that showed engraved images of *Women Who Made a Difference*. The exhibit included an Italian note with a portrait of educator Maria Montessori,



**Maria Montessori, one of the many women recognized on world paper money.**

scientist Marie Curie (Poland and France), social worker Caroline Chisholm (Australia), educator Catherine McAuley (Ireland), singer Kirsten Flagstad (Norway), Jenny Lind (Sweden) and others. Columnist Laura Pulfer, now retired from the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, wrote about the exhibit in her column. When the Series 1996 \$20 note was issued, Laura interviewed me for background information and my opinion. Laura injected a lot of humor in her columns and I miss reading them. To share collecting interest with others I also became a member of the Cincinnati Numismatic Association

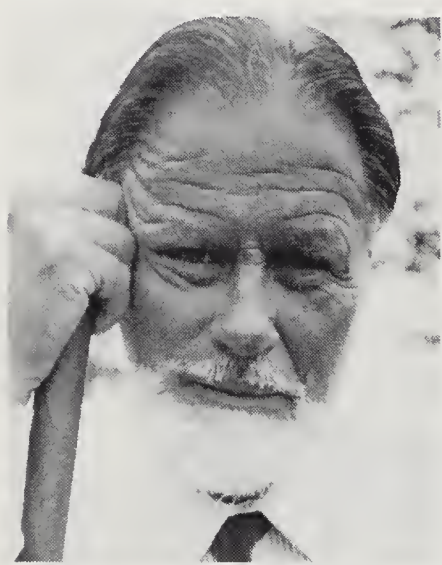
(founded in 1920).

Somewhere in this story I mentioned how I, as well as others changed directions in life. When I was playing in the orchestra for Camelot I witnessed two changes among two musicians. Andrew “Bunny” Baron and Bob Heinrich were the first and second trumpet players in the orchestra. Andrew already had a pilot’s license and had aspirations to fly professionally. Between tunes and musical cues on stage he read flight manuals and charts in preparation for advanced flight tests. After a few months I noticed Bob Heinrich was doing the same thing. A year or so later Andrew became a pilot for Eastern Airlines and Bob joined Pan Am. Both continued to perform, though on a limited basis that would fit their flight schedules. Approximately ten years later, about 1974, I went to Mexico to see and climb the pyramids in the Yucatan and then went to Mexico City to attend a numismatic gathering. In the airport in Mexico City I heard my name and turned around to see Andrew Baron. He was the pilot of the plane for my return to New York City.

Looking back, it seems that I always made the right decision when there was a choice. When I left the San Antonio Symphony and drove to Los Angeles, I decided not to stay there, and at the end of the tour with Woody Herman I could have moved to Las Vegas but decided against it. To quote Yogi Berra, “when you come to a fork in the road, take it.” In my case I always selected the right one. I like to think my good fortune has been in answer to a prayer I continue to say about making the right choice when decisions are at hand. My choice to concentrate on numismatic research and writing seemed to be a natural continuum. Compiling information for *The International Engraver’s Line* put me in touch with many interesting people from all over the world. Through a convoluted series of contacts I became acquainted with Joseph Lawrence Keen, a British engraver. At 80 Joe had been retired for a few years and became seriously involved with the work I was doing. His wife died in early 2000 and he decided a trip might be good for him, so he called from Great Britain and asked if I would be receptive to a visit. I said I would be delighted. Joe spent ten memorable days with me, including a two-day trip to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington, DC. I introduced him to the engravers at the Bureau and they were impressed with examples of his work that I insisted he take with him.



As Joe spoke about his career as an engraver and his engraving colleagues I had a tape recorder documenting everything. The historical information he related to me would have been lost had we not become friends. In July 2004 I received a message from his daughter that Joe had died. He was a vigorous man when I saw him, but his health deteriorated in the last two years of his life. I am extremely fortunate to have met this man. The biographical entry and listed work by Joe Keen (at left) in *The International Engraver's Line* occupies over nine pages.



Joe put me in touch with most surviving British engravers, and I am extremely grateful for this. Other people who expanded my awareness of engravers are František Sedláček in the Czech Republic, Willibald Kranister in Austria, and Takashi Uemura in Japan. I came in contact with Mr. Uemura almost by accident when I was researching Sukeichi Ōyama, a Japanese engraver who worked in the U.S. before 1900. I wrote a letter of inquiry

to the Japanese Security Printing facilities and hoped it would reach the right person—it did. Takashi Uemura, the second in command replied by saying that he was pleased to know someone was interested in Mr. Ōyama. We began a correspondence that continues and we finally met in New York in April, 2001. We spent four days with Mark Tomasko, my friend and fellow researcher. Mark and I possessed information about Sukeichi Ōyama's work in America that we shared with Mr. Uemura for an exhibit he was preparing in Tokyo. Before Mr. Uemura left he put me in touch with Wen-Hsiung Sun in Taiwan, who had studied in China and gave me important biographical data about Chinese engravers. This is another example of how one source helped me with others.

Through Interlibrary loan, before leaving St. Louis, I had access to the diaries of bank note artist and engraver James D. Smillie (1833-1909), son of bank note engraver James Smillie. Following the organization and listing of everything the younger Smillie painted, drew or engraved and when he completed these pieces, all was published in 2001 in *PAPER MONEY*.

These diaries included other pithy entries including one on April

15, 1865: "A dark day for our nation. We were stunned, sickened... by news of the assassination of President Lincoln...last night." On December 5, 1880 he proposed to his wife-to-be Anna. "She surrendered unconditionally. I, too, surrendered under [the] same terms." On November 1, 1885 James D. Smillie "Sat with Father most of the evening. He talked a good deal, although with difficulty, most of the time of approaching death & giving many instructions." (James Smillie died a month later.) Then on January 16, 1909, "My birthday passed without notice of any kind." Editing and making this type of information available to collectors is gratifying for me.

In Cincinnati I continue to document and research the art of hand security engraving, an art form that soon will be obsolete. The recordings on which I played (I didn't keep a log), the books and magazine articles that I have written could be added to the summation of what I tried to accomplish. I didn't earn a lot of money, but I did everything I wanted to do and things I couldn't have imagined. I went beyond Chicago, where as a child I thought the clouds went. It was Mr. McClain, William Wilkins and Ernest Glover who gave me the basics to pursue the career of a trombone player.

Engravers and musicians have a lot in common. Both spend years in privacy while they perfect their individual skills. Then, each of these art forms that had survived for hundreds of years were in many quarters replaced by mechanical means. The synthesizer (now referred to as the virtual orchestra) replaced live music in many circumstances and computer-engraving programs reduced the total number of engravers throughout the world to a few.<sup>3</sup>

As I approach the end of these musings, originally intended for the eyes only of family and friends, I can honestly say that through much of my life I have followed a different drummer, except when performing as a musician. I have become a sociable recluse and often say that I would have no difficulty if incarcerated. I have not withdrawn from the world entirely, though at times it seems like a good idea. I remember a world that was kinder, more caring and less hostile. I prefer and enjoy being alone. Nevertheless, I also enjoy small gatherings of friends so we can share conversation, food and wine. To my surprise and the surprise of others, I do not miss performing as a musician. I was fortunate to have done just about everything I wanted, and I prefer to remember what it was



like rather than attempt to regain sufficient ability to play now and then and risk the chance of someone saying “I remember when he could play.”

I can say with a great deal of satisfaction that I performed with some of the legendary and best musicians in the country if not the world. As a researcher and writer I was fortunate to document and uncover numismatic material and data that might have remained a mystery. In this second career I met and befriended some of the best engraver's in the world. Now, a good book, attendance at an occasional concert, a good meal accompanied with an appropriate bottle of wine, best if shared with friends and, the Public Broadcasting Service and National Public Radio are among the few things that I require.

As a child I do not remember demanding a lot. As children both my brother Jack and I drew cartoon images. When I was fourteen I considered art as a profession but decided on music. Today people have multiple professions, so I could have practiced both art forms. However, I made the correct decision; I made a better musician than I would have an artist. Jack's artistic talent lay dormant until he was in his 30s. Then, in addition to being a professional photographer he began to paint and created wonderful watercolors.

Listening to *All Things Considered* on National Public Radio, as I often do, I heard a playwright speaking about a play he had written about his father. The play was called *Side Man*, and was written by Warren Leight. It centered on the life of his trumpet-playing father, Don, a friend of mine. Warren Leight received the Tony Award for the best new playwright in 2000, and when the play was produced in Cincinnati my nephew Dan, his wife Pam, and I went to see it. When I ordered the tickets by telephone I mentioned how much I was looking forward to seeing a show based on the life of a friend. D. Lynn Meyers, the director at the Cincinnati Ensemble Theater came to the telephone and was excited to speak with someone who had a personal connection with the story. Due to my association with Don Leight she said the tickets that I ordered would be free and I thanked her for her generosity.

Watching the play was almost like seeing part of my professional life on stage. The three primary figures, all trumpet players, were based on real people: Al Stewart, Ziggy Schatz and the central character, Don Leight. When Don improvised one could always hear

the influence of Harry “Sweets” Edison, who played with Count Basie in the 1940s. I worked with Don and recorded with Al and Ziggy. Dialogue included a reference to entering a night club through the kitchen, which I also mentioned earlier in these pages.

The closing soliloquy from *Side Man* had my immediate attention, because I remember when jazz was accepted by a moderate but interested if not devoted segment of our society. Some of those final words are appropriate for ending this story.

“When he’s up there, blowing, he’s totally in touch with everything that’s going on around him. Ziggy bends a note, he echoes it instantly. A car horn sounds outside, he puts it into his solo, or harmonizes it, a second later. I used to wonder how he could sense everything while he was blowing and almost nothing when he wasn’t. Now I just wonder how many more chances I have to hear him blow.

“These guys are not even an endangered species anymore. It’s too late. There are no more big bands, no more territory bands. No more nonets, tentets. No more sixty weeks a year on the road. No more jam sessions ’til dawn.... When they go, that’ll be it.

“No one will even understand what they were doing. A fifty-year blip on the screen. Men who mastered their obsession, who ignored, or didn’t even notice, anything else. They played not for fame, and certainly not for money. They played for each other. To swing. To blow. Night after night, they were just burning brass. Oblivious.”\*

\* *Side Man* by Warren Leight. Copyright © 1998 by Swingline Productions, Inc. Used by permission of Grove/Atlantic, Inc.



## **Appendix A**

### **The Way it Was and What Happened to Live Music and Musicians**

When the leader of a band quoted their fee for a wedding reception the father of the bride replied, "I can get a deejay for that."

IN 1914 THE American Federation of Musicians had 11,000 members. In the 1920s there were 2000 vaudeville houses in the U.S. and Canada. In 1928, the year I was born, over 20,000 musicians were performing for silent movies. When "talkies" were introduced most of these musicians lost their jobs. When recorded sound tracks for films were needed, especially for musicals, musicians were engaged, but far fewer than 20,000 of them.<sup>1</sup>

The first death knell to live music was recordings that were played over the radio. If you examine an early phonograph record prior to the 1950s you will notice "for home use only." This was honored until the 1940s. When radio stations crossed the line and played recordings over the radio airwaves: the floodgate had opened.

In the early days of radio soap operas, dramas, special musical presentations that were broadcast over the radio all made use of live musicians. Each radio station in major cities and some moderate size cities in the U.S. employed live musicians. As a child I remember WLW, WKRC, WCPO and WCKY all employed live musicians. Jimmie James had a dance-type band at WLW that consisted of twelve musicians. In addition there were smaller groups of four or five at WLW, about 25 musicians and singers in all including Doris Day as previously mentioned. Fats Waller was at WLW from 1932-1934, and as a child I remember hearing him on radio broadcasts. I think he was the original organist for the WLW late night Moon River radio show.

Rosemary and Betty Clooney, who came from Maysville, Kentucky, sang at WLW in the 1940s; later they joined Tony Pastor's band. Rosemary left the band to record alone and Betty returned to Cincinnati. I never worked with Rosemary, who, in my opinion, became the best female singer on the planet, however I did work with Betty when she sang with Clyde Trask. Clyde and Jimmie James had successful bands that traveled periodically through the Midwest,

but most of their work was done in Cincinnati.

Considering that most of the then 48 states had an average of at least five to seven cities with three major stations in each that employed five to ten musicians, and there were additional stations with at least four musicians at each one. The networks of ABC, NBC, CBS in New York each employed over 100 musicians. NBC probably had more because members of the NBC Symphony, conducted by Arturo Toscanini, were included in the roster of musicians. Cities like Chicago and Los Angeles also had a large number of musicians under contract. Conservatively, 4000 musicians were employed in radio.

During the 1940s and 1950s the Albee and Shubert theaters in Cincinnati, as other theaters in the country, often had live shows between the movie presentations. If the stage show included a performer who was extremely popular, Frank Sinatra as an example, a fifth show might have been added on weekends. Each theater had a house or pit band that played just before and after the stage show. Deke Moffitt had the house band at the Albee Theater. The band consisted of about fifteen musicians, and it was an excellent band that made you feel like dancing as you left the theater after the stage show. At the time it was a union requirement that when a traveling band played at a theater an equal number of local musicians had to be employed, even if they didn't perform. Some theaters had an organist as well.

In Cincinnati there were theaters including the Taft where additional entertainment took place that required musicians. Each city had theaters in addition to the movie houses. New York had the Paramount, Strand, Capitol, Roxy, the Radio City Music Hall, the Apollo and the Brooklyn Paramount. At each of these theaters one could see a movie and see a live stage show.

Nightclubs (or supper clubs) were another working place for musicians and many cities had more than one club. Most of the clubs in the greater Cincinnati area were just across the Ohio River in Covington or Newport, Kentucky. There were numerous clubs in Kentucky including the Beverly Hills Supper Club, Glenn Rendezvous, Beck's Supper Club, the Primrose Club, the Latin Quarter and the Lookout House; I worked at the latter two for a while after I was discharged from the army. Though illegal, most of these clubs had gambling operations that were ignored by the authorities.



Hotels were another venue where bands played for dining and dancing. Smaller hotels had smaller musical groups. A band would be booked into a hotel for one week or as long as eight or ten weeks. It was often from hotels, and ballrooms that nightly broadcasts were made over network radio. In the 1930s and early 1940s Burt Farber played for noontime dinners and in the evening for dinners and dancers at the Netherland Plaza in Cincinnati. Around the corner from the Albee Theater was the Gibson Hotel with two dining areas, the Florentine Room and the Sidewalk Café, each had live music.

When I moved to New York City in 1955, Vincent Lopez and his orchestra (with about 11 musicians) continued to play in the Grill Room of the Hotel Taft in mid Manhattan. His engagement at the Taft lasted from 1941 until 1961. Other major hotels also had live music nightly.

Ballrooms where name bands and local bands played were plentiful. Cincinnati had the Topper Club, Castle Farm and Moonlight Gardens at Coney Island, the amusement park. Bands crisscrossed the country just playing ballrooms and dance pavilions at amusement parks. North of Cincinnati was Lesourdsville Lake, an amusement park where bands played for dancing in the summer.

There was yet another work place for musicians—Hollywood. Each of the major studios employed large orchestras of about 100 musicians. These salaried positions have disappeared along with the studios. The few studios that remain and independent movie-makers hire musicians as needed, and more often than not, a synthesizer replaces musicians.

If you multiply the number of radio stations, movie theaters, live theaters, especially the Broadway theaters in New York City, nightclubs, jazz clubs and ballrooms around the country, and the now defunct film studios, tens of thousands of musicians were employed. Most of these venues have disappeared and so have most of the musicians.

In the late 1990s the music synthesizer, as part of the future virtual orchestra, could not be denied entrance into the pits of Broadway musicals. In smaller theaters this mechanism has all but replaced musicians. In larger houses the synthesizer complements an orchestra that has been reduced in size. In ten years a virtual orchestra will be augmented with a few live musicians in theater pits.

By the 1950s no more than twenty to twenty-five symphony orchestras had seasons longer than thirty weeks. Most members of the Cincinnati Orchestra, and those of many other orchestras worked at alternate jobs during the “off season.” In 1957 Sputnik awakened us to Soviet space technology; at the same time touring musicians from Russia captured the attention of American concert goers; we had to meet the challenge of both science and music.

Contributions for the arts mushroomed almost overnight and continued for the next fifteen years. Foundations including the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation and other private money made art “hip.” Lincoln Center in New York City and the National Cultural Center, now the Kennedy Center were built, and the National Foundation for the Arts and Humanities was established in 1965; this became the National Endowment for the Arts.<sup>2</sup> In 1971 Richard Nixon increased the NEA budget to \$40 million. Symphony orchestras and opera houses received grants and new chamber groups and ballet companies now had money to extend their short seasons. “The American attitude toward the arts has completed a 180-degree turn since the end of World War II... From one of apathy, indifference, and even hostility, it has become one of eager, if sometimes ignorant, enthusiasm.”<sup>3</sup> Agnes DeMille had another take on this. She said, “The whole tendency today is to help the unknowns and the unproven, but all that does is encourage mediocrity.”

In 1970 symphony orchestras in the U.S. took in \$30 million, but they spent over \$76 million. Twenty years later income was \$290 million<sup>4</sup> and spending totaled \$688.9 million.<sup>5</sup>

At the turn of the millennium some symphony orchestras were required to shorten their seasons or accept a freeze in salaries. All the new money that extended orchestra seasons, and created new orchestras, ballet and theater companies did not always create bigger audiences. Longer seasons meant additional salaries. Corporate money that had gone to the arts now went to education and health care, the arts suffered. Black Monday in October 1987, the stock market lost 508 points, and the 1987 Tax Reform Act reduced philanthropic giving.

Some who benefited from the stock market boom in 1995 contributed to endowments for the arts. Five years later the stock market went the other way and orchestras were dipping into principal



as monetary interest on endowments was reduced dramatically.

Now orchestras, ballets and community theaters had bigger deficits. Orchestras in Denver, New Orleans, Kansas City, San Antonio and elsewhere folded, as did some ballet companies. Most of these orchestras reorganized but with smaller budgets and shorter seasons. If this pattern continues, only eight or ten of the largest cities will have symphony orchestras, ballet companies and community theaters with seasons long enough to engage performers at a decent salary.

Musicians in the pit of theaters were, in the opinion of many, part of the show. Now musicians are not even visible in some theaters and other venues. Music without musicians in sight is becoming common and audiences accept it without question. Theaters, television shows, beauty pageants all require music, but it is sent through a speaker system. The musicians, augmented by a digital virtual orchestra, are often in another part of the building where the conductor officiates as he watches a television screen, seeing what the audience sees. In some instances all the music is created by a virtual orchestra, and when it is, audiences pay ticket prices that deserve live music but they accept this substitute without question. Currently there are about 30 Broadway theaters in New York City [for dramatic and musical productions]; in the 1920s the number was closer to 70.<sup>6</sup>

The amount of recording in New York, and elsewhere became an echo of what it had been in the 1960s. It had been common for musicians like Urbie Green, Milt Hinton, and those who were always called first for recordings at different studios often played three dates in one day: 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., 2:00-5:00 p.m. and 7:00-10:00 p.m. By the 1980s they were doing fewer than three or four each week, if that many.

In 2006 Patricia Grignet Nott, oboist with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (1960-1964) and former Dean of Musicians at the New World Symphony (NWS) in Miami Beach, moved into the building where I live, and enlightened me about the NWS. The NWS is a post graduate orchestral academy conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. After auditions the NWS accepts only those musicians who demonstrate exceptional musical talent and ability. Along with Juilliard, the Manhattan School of Music, the Curtis Institute, the

Cincinnati College Conservatory at the University of Cincinnati and other music schools in the U.S., a surprising number of young musicians are being prepared for a limited number of orchestral and chamber music positions. Today, these musicians and many young jazz musicians perform at a level beyond what I did and heard. Nevertheless, I am not optimistic about the future of classical music and jazz. I hope and pray that I am wrong in my assessment, but the future looks bleak.

The digital age brought the expectation of immediate satisfaction, and potential future concert goers were not led to the concert hall to hear classical music. Performances in arenas, auditoriums and concert halls are sold out to rock and pop group audiences. Unless a major, classical, name performer is there, many seats in concert halls often remain empty. When performing to a half filled theater the late pianist, comedian and entertainer Victor Borge had the following to say to his audience: "This must be an extremely wealthy town. I see that each of you bought tickets for two or three seats."



**Portraits signed by some of the performers I worked with including Rise Stevens, Dizzy Gillespie, Leonard Bernstein, Angela Lansbury and Julie Andrews.**



## Appendix B

### People with Whom the Author Performed

THIS LIST INCLUDES some musicians and performers I had the good fortune to work with and some performance locations. I worked with some of these artists only a few times, some at a recording session, where you seldom knew who would be there until you entered the studio. Others were part of a group that was together for weeks or years.

#### Female Performers

##### Popular and Jazz

Julie Andrews  
Theresa Brewer  
Carol Burnett  
June Christy  
Hermione Gingold  
Billie Holiday (her last performance)  
Linda Hopkins  
Angela Lansbury  
Michelle Lee  
Helen O'Connell  
Patti Page  
Dianna Ross  
Nina Simone  
Barbra Streisand  
Gwen Verdon

##### Classical

Eileen Farrell  
Dame Margo Fontaine  
Elisabeth Schwarzkopf  
Risë Stevens  
Joan Sutherland (U.S. debut)

#### Male Performers

##### Popular and Jazz

Eddie Albert  
Steve Allen  
Woody Allen  
Harry Belafonte  
Richard Burton  
Red Buttons

Robert Coote  
Sammy Davis Jr.  
Jimmy Durante  
Ray Eberle  
Robert Goulet  
Al Hibler  
Allen King  
Richard Kiley  
Frankie Laine  
Roddy McDowell  
Robert Morse  
Zero Mostel  
Bert Parks  
Robert Preston  
Johnny Raye  
Jimmy Roselli  
Jerry Vale  
Rudy Vallee

##### Classical

Jorge Bolet  
Robert Casadesu  
George London  
Yehudi Menuhin  
Leonard Rose

##### Conductors

Franz Allers  
Victor Allessandro  
Leon Barzin  
Leonard Bernstein  
Eleazar de Carvalho  
Carlos Chavez

Aaron Copland  
Arthur Fiedler  
Nicolas Flagello  
Lucas Foss  
Paul Gemignani  
Herb Green  
Howard Hanson  
John Lesko  
Charles Münch  
Jonel Perlea  
Max Rudolph  
Gunther Schuller  
William Steinberg  
Leopold Stokowski

**Orchestras**

Brooklyn Philharmonic  
Cincinnati Symphony  
(World Tour 1966)  
Connecticut Symphony  
Leningrad Philharmonic  
(in New York City)  
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra  
(as an extra musician)  
New York Philharmonic (as an extra)  
San Antonio Symphony (1957-1959)  
Symphony of the Air  
(formerly NBC Symphony)

**Dance & Jazz Bands**

Les & Larry Elgart  
Ralph Flannigan  
Eddie Grady and the Commanders  
Woody Herman  
Elliot Lawrence  
Richard Maltby  
Billy May  
(Dick) Meldonian-(Sonny) Igoe  
Big Band  
Russ Morgan  
Nat Pierce  
Tito Puente  
Boyd Raeburn  
Buddy Rich  
Bill Russo  
Sauter-Finegan

**Musicians**

**Trumpets**

Nat Adderly  
Cat Anderson  
Bill Berry  
John Best  
James Burke  
Johnny Carisi  
Burt Collins  
Dick Collins  
Allan Dean  
John Eckert  
Rolf Erickson  
Joe Ferrante  
Stan Fishelson  
John Frosk  
Dizzy Gillespie  
Bernie Glow  
Bob Heinrich  
Maceo Hampton  
Lee Katzman  
Markie Markowitz  
Jimmy Maxwell  
Doug Mettome  
Fred Mills  
Louie Mucci  
Jimmy Nottingham  
Al Porcino  
Dick Sherman  
Doc Severinsen  
Gerard Schwartz  
Lew Soloff  
Al Stewart  
Nick Travis  
Charlie Walp

**Trombones**

Wayne Andre  
Eddie Bert  
Per Brevig  
Jimmy Cleveland  
Jim Dahl  
Jack Elliot  
Bill Elton  
Jack Gale



## Hey! Mister Horn Blower

Urbie Green  
Slide Hampton  
Frank Hunter  
Birch Johnson  
Dick Kenney  
Jimmy Knepper  
Johnny Messner  
Benny Morton  
Bobby Pring  
Gordon Pulis  
Jim Pugh  
Frank Rehak  
Ephy Resnick  
Bill Russo  
Sonny Russo  
Charlie Small  
Tony Studd  
Jim Thompson  
Cy Touff (bass trpt.)  
Bill Watrous  
Ollie Wilson

### **Bass Trombone**

Gil Cohen  
Bob Dockstader  
Paul Faulise  
Dick Hixon  
Dick Lieb  
Dean Plank  
Alan Raph  
Dave Taylor  
Bart Varsalona

### **Saxophones**

Julian "Cannonball" Adderly  
Don Ashworth  
Gordon Brisker  
Al Cohn  
Med Flory  
Stan Getz  
Dick Hafer  
Paul Horn  
Richie Kamuca  
Wally Kane

Gary Keller  
Lee Konitz  
Warne Marsh  
Hal McQuisik  
Dick Meldonian  
Gerry Mulligan  
Tommy Newsom  
Seldon Powell  
Art Perie  
Gene Quill  
Paul Quinichette  
Charlie Rouse  
Zoot Sims  
Spence Sinatra  
Frankie Socolow  
Joe Soldo  
Phil Urso  
Earl Warren  
Frank Wess  
Phil Woods

### **French Horn**

Ray Alonge  
Dave Amram  
Arthur Berv  
Harry Berv  
Dale Clevenger  
Brooks Tillotson  
Larry Wechsler

### **Tuba**

Bill Barber  
John Buckingham  
Don Butterfield  
Tony Price  
Bill Stanley  
Harvey Phillips

### **Piano**

John Bunch  
Junior Mance  
Marty Napoleon  
Hod O'Brien  
Derek Smith  
George Syran

**Bass**

John Beal  
Aaron Bell  
Bill Crow  
Richard Davis  
Milt Hinton  
Chuck Israels  
Wendell Marshall  
Ralph Peña  
Frank Proto  
Jack Six

**Guitar**

Kenny Burrell  
Howie Collins  
Marty Grosz  
Bucky Pizzarelli  
Turk van Lake

**Drummers**

Jimmy Crawford  
Sue Evans  
Chuck Flores  
Sol Gubin  
Sonny Igoe  
Hank Jaramillo  
Gus Johnson  
“Philly Joe” Jones  
Don Lamond  
Mel Lewis  
Steve Little  
Howie Mann  
Joe Morello  
Buddy Rich  
Bob Rosengarden  
Ed Shaughnessy  
Winston Welch

**Broadway Musicals**

*Annie*  
*Applause*  
*Camelot*  
*Fiddler on the Roof*  
*From A to Z*

*Funny Girl*  
*Hello Dolly*  
*How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*  
*La Plume de ma Tante*  
*Once Upon a Mattress*  
*Red Head*  
*1776*  
*Sweeney Todd*  
*The Music Man*

**Legendary Performance Locations**

Apollo Theatre (New York City)  
Brooklyn Paramount  
Paramount Theatre (NYC)  
Radio City Music Hall (NYC)  
Roxy Theatre (NYC)

**Ballrooms & Clubs**

Arcadia Ballroom (New York City)  
Copacabana (NYC)  
Frank Dailey’s Meadowbrook Ballroom in Cedar Grove, NJ  
Latin Quarter (NYC)  
Roseland (NYC)  
The Rustic Cabin (NJ)  
Steel Pier (Atlantic City)  
Aragon (Chicago)  
Trianon (Chicago)  
Most ballrooms and dance pavilions at amusement parks in the U.S.

**Concert Halls**

Avery Fischer Hall in Lincoln Center  
Brooklyn Academy of Music  
Carnegie Hall  
Madison Square Garden (original location)  
Metropolitan Opera House (original location)  
Music Hall (Cincinnati)  
Town Hall, New York City  
European & Asian halls on Cincinnati Symphony Tour (1966).



## Endnotes

### Preface

1. The Cincinnati Musicians Union is Local 1, organized in 1881. The American Federation of Musicians, to which all musicians unions in America and Canada belong was not established until 1896.
2. Beryl Markham, *West with the Night*, (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), p. 153.

### Chapter I, An Urban Musical Childhood Growing up in Cincinnati

1. The following relatives lived on Elizabeth Street. My maternal grandfather George Schmidt (1862-1939), my paternal grandfather John Hessler (1877-1915), four of my mother's sisters, Julia, Paula, Cunigunda (Cunda) and my mother's twin, Anna, who married Lawrence Staab, and their only child, Geraldine; my Aunt Paula, who married Frank Denninger, Service Director for Mount Healthy, and their children Margaret, Vincent and Adrian, as well as one of my father's brothers, my Uncle Gus and his wife Martha and their children Shirley, Jim, Jerry, Jane and Maryanne; my father's sister Stella, who married Frank Curley and their children Paul, Robert and John; my father's other two brothers Anthony and his wife Hilda and their children Judy, Corrine and Cindy lived a few blocks away as did my father's youngest brother Carl and his wife Lois and their children Linda, Stephanie and Mary. In addition, two of my father's uncles, Joseph and Louis, both Hesslers, also lived on Elizabeth Street.
2. *One Square Mile 1817-1992*. (Mt. Healthy, Mt. Healthy Historical Society, 1992), p. 19.
3. John Leland, *Hip: the history* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), p. 30.
4. (*The [Cincinnati] Enquirer*, Aug. 12, 2005).
5. Zane L. Miller and Bruce Tucker, *Changing Plans for America's Inner Cities: Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine and Twentieth Century Urbanism* (Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 1998), pp. 2 and 3.
6. In Cincinnati there is a wonderful group called the Faux Frenchmen that performs in the style of the Hot Club of France.

### Chapter II, High School Bopster and Jitterbug

1. Years later while living in New York City on a visit to Cincinnati I saw the same face on WCPO Television; it was newscaster Al Schottelkotte.
2. In the 1930s Benny Goodman was the first to have an integrated band by hiring black musician, pianist Teddy Wilson. In the 1940s Woody Herman could have been the first to hire female jazz musicians, vibraphonist Margie Hyams and trumpeter Billie Rogers.
3. Lester Young was one of the most influential tenor saxophonists in the history of jazz. His style of playing can be traced to a solo by white saxophonist Frankie Trumbauer on a recording of "Singin' the Blues." Cornetist Bix Beiderbecke and

clarinetist Jimmy Dorsey are also on that 1927 recording. Nolan, Tom. "White-Hot Jazz Ballad," *The Wall Street Journal*, 2-3 June 2007, sec. P, p. 14.

4. John Leland, *Hip: the history* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), p. 117.

5. Leland, p. 194.

6. Leland, p. 288.

### **Chapter III, On the Road**

1. There were broadcasts from Bop City and other locations. Some broadcasts were recorded by jazz fans who have since put them on "bootleg" CDs, which may be found for sale on the Internet.

2. The Paramount Theater with a seating capacity of 3600 was located between 43rd and 44th Streets on the west side of Broadway and operated from 1926-1964. The Neo-Renaissance interior was gutted for office space in 1965.

3. Gordon Jack, *Fifties jazz talk, an oral retrospective*. (Lanham, Maryland, Toronto, Oxford, The Scarecrow Press, 2004), p. 112.

4. Bill Crow, *Jazz Anecdotes*, (New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990), p.152.

### **Chapter V, Return to College and the Cincinnati Music Scene, 1953-1955**

1. Some members of my band at different times were: trumpets, Bill Berry, Dick Brown, Don Hammerlein, Jim Smith and Dick Westrich; trombones, Hal Harris, Tommy Parker and Dick Seifert; saxophones, Gordon Brisker, Russell Girt, Milt Ostrow, Dick Purdy and Dorrance Stalvey; drummers, Carl Grasham, Allen Berk and Dick Remmy; double basses, Alex Cirin and Harvey Abramson; piano Jerry Black and Dick Wardwell. Bill Berry and Gordon Brisker were the only ones to gain national and international reputations. When I moved to New York in 1955 Dick Purdy purchased the library of arrangements.

2. I was interviewed on WNOP, the only station with a jazz format at the time in Cincinnati. It could have been Ernie Waits who interviewed me and played the recordings of my band. Ernie died in October 2004.

3. The most famous band boy was Popsie Randolph who spent a time with Benny Goodman, and other band leaders as personal valet. While playing a date at Princeton University, Popsie realized he had no cigarettes for Benny. He ran through the campus and found nothing when he bumped into a grey-haired guy, in need of a haircut, in baggy pants and sweater. Popsie was directed to a candy store only to find out later, to his surprise, the "old guy" was Albert Einstein. With Benny's assistance Popsie became a successful photographer of musicians and entertainers.

4. Bob Sneider was the band leader at the Lookout House and later at the Latin Quarter where I also worked with him. Bob was understanding and allowed me to send in a substitute when my band had a gig. Most often my substitute was Al Jorden, Doris Day's first husband.



5. I don't know how Woody Herman found my name; I can only assume that after being on the road with Elliot's band, Woody heard of me through the musical grapevine as being from Cincinnati.

6. I had mentioned to some of the guys in Woody's band that I needed time to study French in preparation for studies at the Manhattan School of Music. Dick Collins, the lead trumpet player, who had a degree in library science and for a while worked at the Los Angeles main library, said he spoke French and would help. That didn't happen, so I spent a lot of time alone working on French.

7. To his credit Woody Herman always had good bands with exceptional musicians. However, he was never recognized for his jazz solos. Some musician summed up Woody's career by saying "There but for the grace of arranger Ralph Burns goes Ted Lewis." Ted Lewis played clarinet and led a commercial band.

## **Chapter VI, Back in the Big Apple and Graduate School**

1. It was at this apartment where I first became interested in cooking and there was a quality meat market nearby. With little knowledge about some organ meats, one day I purchased kidneys, lamb, I think. Without thinking and knowing they should be soaked in salt water for at least two hours I plopped them in a skillet. The immediate aroma was extremely offensive.

2. Bill Crow, *Jazz Anecdotes*, (New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 321.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid. p. 318.

5. Bill Crow, "The Band Room," *Allegro*, Vol. CVI No. 3 (March 2006): p. 23.

6. About a year after Dizzy was at Birdland Woody was working at the *Riverboat* in the Empire State Building. Bill Watrous was playing the engagement and called me to substitute for him one night. That was the last time I worked and spoke with Woody. He died in 1987 in debt. He trusted his manager, who hadn't paid appropriate taxes to the IRS.

## **Chapter VIII, Back in New York**

1. Benny Morton (b. 1907) and Earl Warren (b. 1914) were members of the Count Basie band whose recordings I listened to in the 1940s. It was a thrill to meet them but a bigger thrill to perform with them.

2. In 1929 John D. Rockefeller, Jr. created Rockefeller Center that covered the entire block from 49th to 50th Streets on 6th Avenue. This building was the home of the NBC network. Rockefeller had planned an opera house across 50th Street but decided to build an entertainment palace in 1933, which he named The Radio City Music Hall reflecting the radio center nearby.

3. Gordon Jack, *Fifties jazz talk, an oral retrospective* (Lanham, Maryland, Toronto, Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2004), p. 220. For an extended and inside report of the Benny Goodman tour see Bill Crow, *From Birdland to Broadway* (New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 195.

## Chapter IX, Broadway and other Gigs

1. Don Plumby became the initial force in the 1960s that enabled us in the mid 1980s to rid ourselves of the rascals who ran Local 802. By this time John Glasel had become our spokesman and was elected president.
2. Gordon Jack, *Fifties jazz talk, an oral retrospective* (Lanham, Maryland, Toronto, Oxford, The Scarecrow Press, 2004), p. 215
3. Marion Evans arranged and conducted the *Swinging West* album that included *Your Cheatin' Heart* and *I'm an Old Cowhand* for Steve Lawrence who said the day of the recording was "the day the West was swung."
4. Prior to the final movement in the Bruckner 8th Symphony there is a lengthy period where the extra trombones at the rear of the audience didn't play, Trombonist Dave Uber suggested we go across the street to a bar and have a drink. (He probably timed this section during the rehearsal.) We went to the bar and after 35 minutes, or so, we returned in time to play the finale.

## Chapter X, Touring: Africa and Round the World 1964-1969

1. I started to keep an African diary but didn't follow through. I should have kept the itinerary but didn't. I did retain the "book" of plane tickets and passport with all the entries. While in Togo I walked to the beach where fishermen were emptying their nets. With a smile that could not have been bigger, one of the fishermen presented me with a fish about 18 inches in length. I thanked him and walked a distance where I tossed the fish into the water. I hope he didn't see me.
2. Charles Miller, *The Lunatic Express* (New York, Macmillan Company, 1971).
3. Ethel Younghusband, *Glimpses of East Africa and Zanzibar* (Nairobi, Kenya Colony, The Zanzibar Government, no date, ca. 1930), p. 212.
4. In was in Athens during the love-death music from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* that the entire trombone section became so mesmerized with the beautiful performance that we missed a brief musical entrance. We exchanged glances when we realized our mistake. However, no one made eye contact with Max Rudolph, the conductor.

## Chapter XI, New York and St. Louis, Music and Numismatics 1967-1996

1. Perhaps the numismatic seed was planted in my childhood. As a child of seven or eight I remember holding a new five-cent piece with the American Indian on the obverse and the buffalo on the reverse. At the time I thought the design was interesting and put the coin aside to keep. A month later I purchased a candy bar with this beautiful coin. As a result of admiring that coin I think a germ of interest was planted that remained latent until I was in my 30s. That five-cent coin design, in my opinion, remains the most beautiful coin made in the U.S.
2. The American Numismatic Society (ANS) was organized in 1858, incorporated in 1865 and is affiliated as a constitutional member of the American Council of Learned Societies and is a supporting member of the American Academy of



Rome and the American School of Classical Studies in Greece. The ANS publishes a monthly journal.

The mission of The American Numismatic Society is to be the preeminent national institution advancing the study and appreciation of coins, medals and related objects of all cultures as historical and artistic documents, by maintaining the foremost numismatic collection and library, by supporting scholarly research and publications, and by sponsoring educational and interpretive programs for diverse audiences. The ANS has a worldwide membership of about 2000 and is currently located at 75 Varick Street, New York, NY 10013.

3. The *Numismatist*, first published in 1888 by George F. Health, a physician and collector became the official journal of the American Numismatic Association when it was established in 1891.

The American Numismatic Association is a nonprofit organization devoted to the education of collectors of money and related items, and to encouraging the study of numismatics. Any person interested in the hobby of numismatics is encouraged to become a member. The ANA has a membership of about 30,000 and is located at 818 N. Cascade Avenue, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 80903.

4. Another successful museum exhibit was built around the opening of the Jungle of the Apes habitat at the St. Louis Zoo. Again, coins and paper money that had images of this species was the focal point of the exhibit. A large silver coin dated 1975 from Zaire has the images of a gorilla and offspring. Other examples of money with gorillas were few consequently, it was necessary to stretch the subject to include monkeys. Bank notes from Indonesia, Gibraltar, Guyana and Rwanda helped to complete the exhibit. In 1991 Zaire issued a 50,000 Zaires bank note with a family of gorillas on the back. This note is attractive and popular, but fifteen years late for the exhibit.

5. Richard G. Doty, PhD was conference chairman for *America's Currency 1789-1866* (New York, Coinage of the America's Conference at The American Numismatic Society, 1985). Additional participants included Douglas B. Ball, Carl W.W. Carlson, Elvira Clain-Stefanelli, Grover C. Criswell, Cory Gilliland, Eric P. Newman, Robert Vlack and Raymond H. Williamson.

6. Jimn Haxby, former curator of the National Currency Collection at the Bank of Canada, is the author of the *Standard Catalog of United States Obsolete Bank Notes 1782-1866* (Iola, WI, Krause Publications, 1988).

7. The monthly columns I wrote for *Coin World*, the *Numismatist* and other newsstand publications were intended to inform average collectors about paper money, its history and what was collectible. Most of the articles I wrote for *PAPER MONEY* were the result of research about some discovery or new information about particular engravers.

## **Chapter XII, Back Home Again in Cincinnati**

1. My sister, nieces and nephews live not too far from where I am, and that most certainly was an inducement. As an aging bachelor it made sense to have surviving

family members in the neighborhood. It was November 1996 when I returned to Cincinnati. We know that Thomas Wolfe wrote that “you can’t go home again.” Well, I might not have come home but I returned to a nearby neighborhood.

2. While living in New York and on a visit to Cincinnati I met John von Ohlen. I mentioned that I had played with Elliot Lawrence. Excitedly John said his favorite drum break is by Sol Gubin on “Walkin’ My Baby Back Home,” recorded by Elliot Lawrence. I played the arrangement many times but was in the army when the recording was made.

3. Computer generated engraving programs create an image when “A scanned image is created by placing a bitmap of the subject on the screen and then working it over by laying down strategic lines following the surface. These lines are placed wherever there is a change of plane or direction. The computer then fills the spaces in between these lines with the operator’s choice of division and texture. All of this editable, and the thickness of the line is changed simply by ‘stroking’ the line with the mouse. High-tech printers make automatic adjustments with necessary; thus fewer press operators are required, and time and costs are saved.” Gene Hessler, *The International Engraver’s Line* (Cincinnati, OH: self-published, 2005), p. 5.

## Appendix A

1. The American Federation of Musicians had 100,000 members in 1934 and 331,000 in 1976. In 2006 membership had dropped to 90,000. When I moved to New York City in 1955 Local 802 had a membership of 30,000, and when I left in 1986 it was 15,000 and continues to decline. George Seltzer, *Music matters, the performer and the American Federation of Musicians* (Metuchen, NJ & London, Scarecrow Press, 1989) p. 157.

2. George Washington asked Congress to “accelerate the progress of art and science; to patronize works of genius.” The 1789 Congress had other priorities and Washington’s plea wasn’t among them. The first professional orchestra in the United States was the City of New York Philharmonic Society. This organization that became the New York Philharmonic was founded in 1842; the first season consisted of four concerts. Orchestras were assembled in other cities and philanthropic organizations provided support. Some immigrants wanted and expected to hear classical music.

3. Alfred Toffler, *The Culture Consumers* (New York, St. Martin’s Press, 1964).

4. Alice G. Marquis, *Art Lessons: Learning from the Rise and Fall of Public Arts Funding*, (New York, Basic Books, 1995).

5. George Seltzer, *Music matters, the performer and the American Federation of Musicians* (Metuchen, NJ & London, Scarecrow Press, 1989) p. 198.



## **Publications and articles by Gene Hessler**

### **Books**

BNR Press, Port Clinton, OH

*An illustrated history of U.S. loans* (1988).

*Comprehensive catalog of U.S. paper money* (1974, 1977, 1980, 1983, 1992, 1997 and 2006; the 2006 edition was edited by Carlson Chambliss).

*The engraver's line* (1993).

*U.S. essay proof and specimen notes* (1979, 2004).

### Self-published

*The international engraver's line* (2005). (Three versions: 630 collector copies; 100 premium copies with signed bank notes and engravings; 20 deluxe copies, with a different cover, and five additional signed bank notes.)

### **Booklets**

Professional Currency Dealers Association, Milwaukee, WI.

*Collecting large size U.S. currency*, 1999.

*Collecting U.S. obsolete currency*, 1991.

### **Articles**

American Bank Note Company, Horsham, PA.

*The American paper money collection*, introduction and descriptions for bank notes, 1993.

Numismatist, American Numismatic Association, Colorado Springs, CO.

(Contributing Editor)

G.F.C. Smillie, bank note engraver, September 1990.

St. Nick notes, December 1989.

Siege of Mafeking, May 1982.

*Money Talks*: about 30 scripts that were broadcast on National Public Radio. These may be seen on the Internet within Google, under "Gene Hessler" and groups.

Notes on paper, monthly, bi-monthly and quarterly columns 1992-2005.

American Numismatic Society, New York, NY.

*America's Currency 1789-1866*. The history and development of 'America' as symbolized by an American Indian female. Coinage of the Americas Conference, New York October 31-November 2, 1985.

Bank Note Reporter, Krause Publications, Iola, WI.

A priceless receipt signed by John Hancock, November 1976.

Essays & proofs, a fascinating sideline to paper money hobby, June 1979.

Green bank note ink counterfeit deterrent, June 1985.

Possibilities for topical collecting are unlimited, June 1984.

Rare vignettes can be found on foreign [notes], June 1983.

Security printing on the move, November 1990.

The national motto's currency evolution, June 1981.

Three George Washington checks (only one is authentic), June 1976.

U.S. 1862 certificates are rare reminders of Civil War, June 1982.

Canadian Paper Money Society Journal, Ontario, Canada.

The engravers of the Canada 1986-1991 issue. Vol. 39, Serial No. 123, 2003

COINage Magazine, Miller Publications, Ventura, CA.

As real as a \$3 bill, October 1974.

Altered with a reason, October 1989.

American originals, May 1986.

Bank notes on the right track, December 1986.

Coins in the key of B, February 1990.

Copy cats, July 1987.

Currency in the coming year, January 1987.

Currency in the spotlight, August 1998.

Czech rejects, November 1992.

Freedom, April 1989.

Images of the West, May 1987.

Notes that might have been, November 1988.

100 years of currency collecting, September 1991.

Paper boon, June 1986.

Paper people, February 1986.

Passing on the challenge, August 1993.

St. Louis dream, November 1986.

Secretly signed currency, August 1994.

Souvenir cards from paradise, December 1988.

The first Miss America, October 1990.

Ten favorite bank notes, July 1986.

The paper collector, '86 yearbook.

The paper collector, yearbook '87.

They papered the world, September 1990.

Vignettes of history, October 1987.

Washington collection, December 1989.

A woman's touch, paying tribute to women engravers, December, 2005.

Coin World, Amos Press, Sidney, OH.

Franklin's contribution to field great, June 10, 1981.

Note-ables, a monthly column, 1993-2004. (Reprints appeared under The Buck Stops Here in *PAPER MONEY*).

Notes from St. Nick, December 21 1992.

Coin World Paper Money Values

Architectural styles designer's focus for first euro notes, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2005.

Big cats, Vol. 2, No.2, 2006.

Changes in bank note designs, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2007.

Designs that might have been, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2006.

Hands as symbols, Vol. 4, No.1, 2008.



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PAPER MONEY, the journal of the Society of Paper Money Collectors, Dallas, TX. (From 1984–1998 I served as editor of *PAPER MONEY*).

From 1973-2007, I wrote 166 articles, including *The Buck Stops Here*, reprints of some in *Coin World* under the Note-ables column.

## **Awards & Recognition**

American Numismatic Association

*Catherine Sheehan Literary Award*, 1996

*Farran Zerbe Award*, 2008

*Glen Smedley Award*, 1993

*Heath Literary Award*, 1983

*Medal of Merit*, 1995

*Presidential Award*, 1998

American Numismatic Society Elected Fellow

International Bank Note Society *40th Anniversary Silver Medal*, 2001

Marquis *Who's Who in the East, Midwest, America, the World* (various editions)

Middle Atlantic Numismatic Association *Numismatist of the Year*, 2001

Numismatic Literary Guild *Clemy Literary Award*, 2007

Numismatic News *Numismatic Ambassador Award*, 1993

Professional Currency Dealers Association *Outstanding Achievement Award*, 1994

Society of International Numismatics *Medal of Merit*, 1992

Society of Paper Money Collectors

*Award of Merit*, 1994

*Dr. Glenn E. Jackson Award*, 1991, 1997

*Honorary Life Member*

*Forrest Daniel Award*, 2008

*Julian Blanchard Award*, numerous

*Founders Award*, 2008

*Nathan Gold Award*, 1974, 1990



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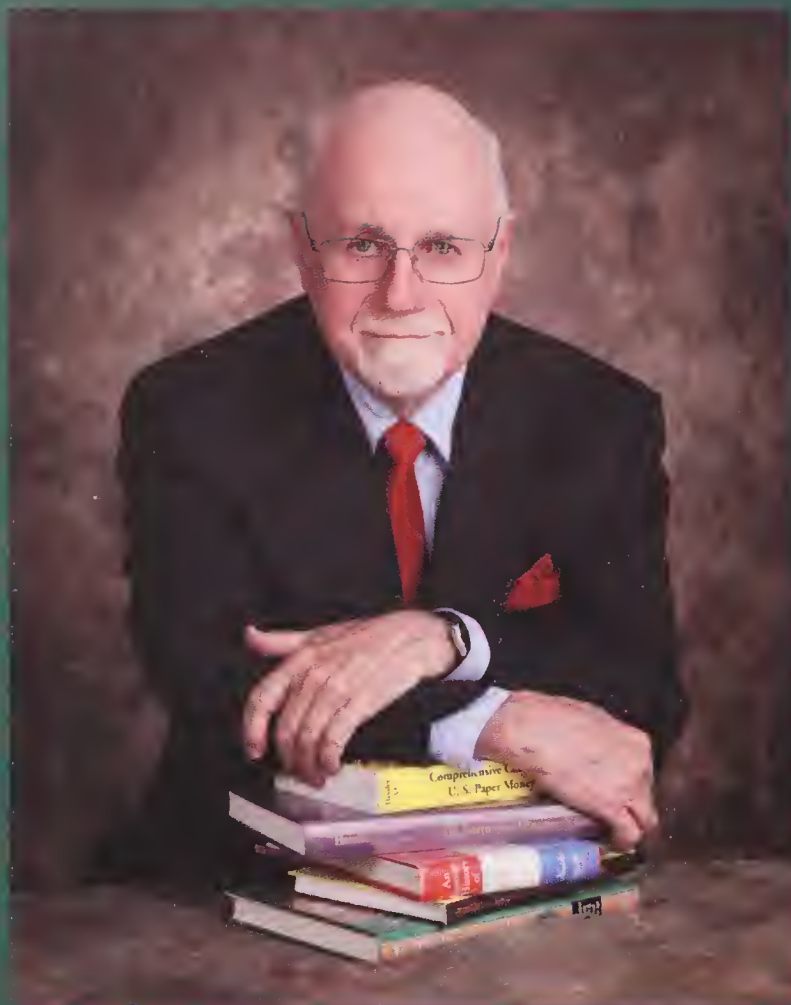
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